VIZ Signature

Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

vol. 22

English Edition

Vagabond Vol. 22

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Story & Art by
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Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

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PARENTAL ADVISORY
VAGABOND is rated M for Mature and is recommended for mature readers. This volume contains graphic violence and sexually explicit situations.

Vagabond

vol. 22

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HOW MANY TIMES WILL YOU FORCE ME TO DRAW OUT MY FATAL STROKE...?

HUF

HUF

#189
Burdened

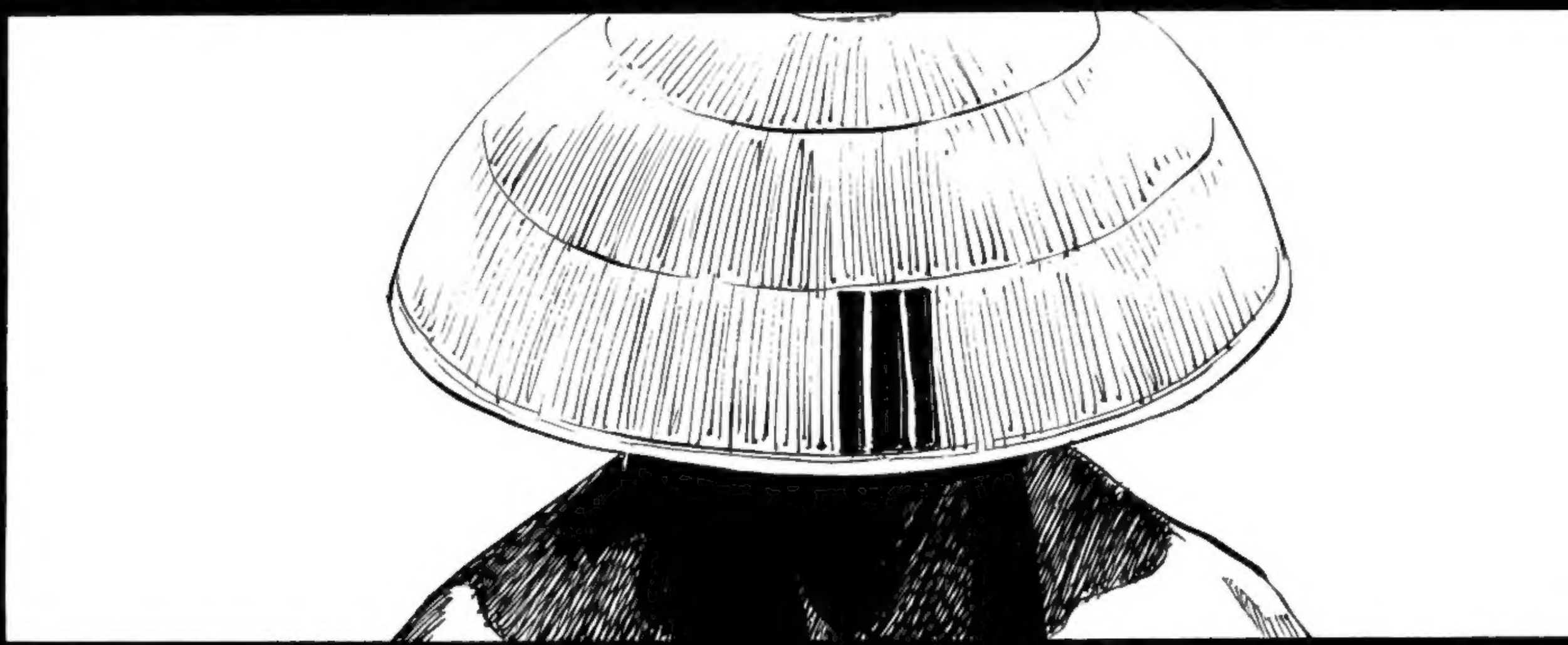
THAT SMALL BODY LOOKS SO HUGE.

THAT'S THE YOSHIOKA STYLE.

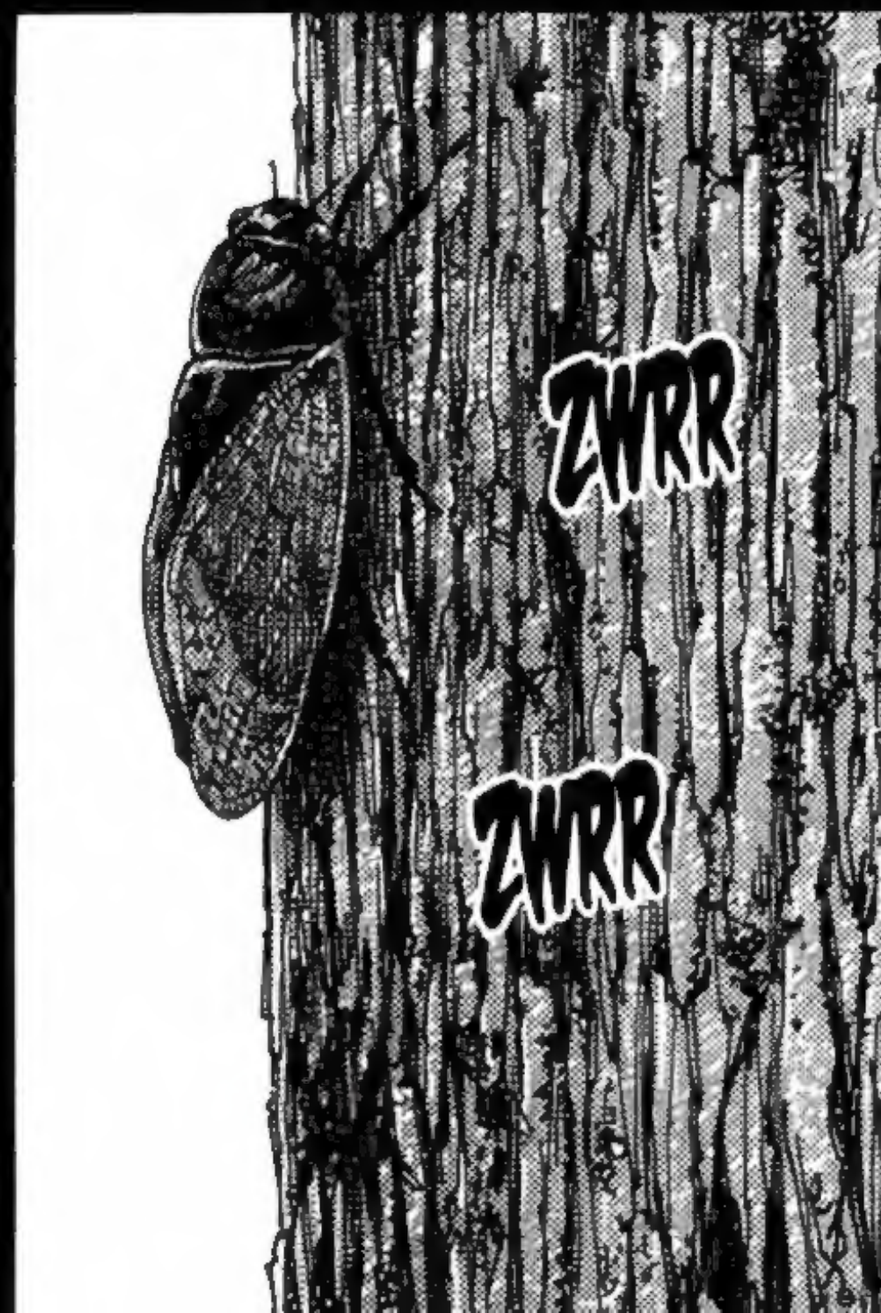
PUTTING YOUR ENTIRE SELF INTO THE SWORD.

TWENTY YEARS AGO... RENDAIJI FIELD

YOU WERE SENTENCED TO DEATH.
NOW YOUR LIFE IS IN MY HANDS.



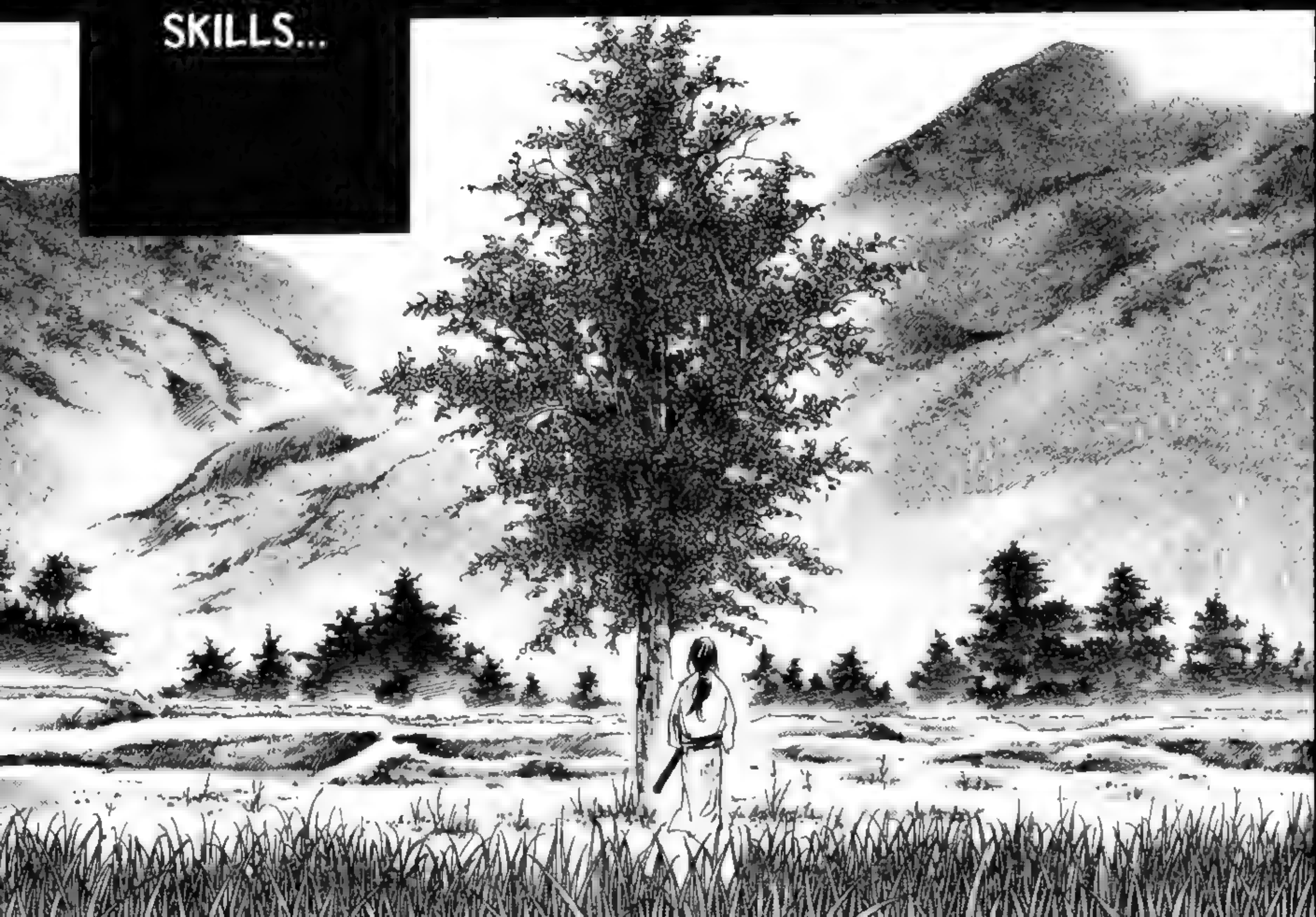
FWMP


ZWRR
ZWRR

FIGHT FOR YOUR LIFE.
FWISH
FWISH
FWISH
HAK HAK
HOW BOTHER-SOME...
THE GRASS IS TOO TALL.

FWISH

PERFECTING ONE'S SKILLS...

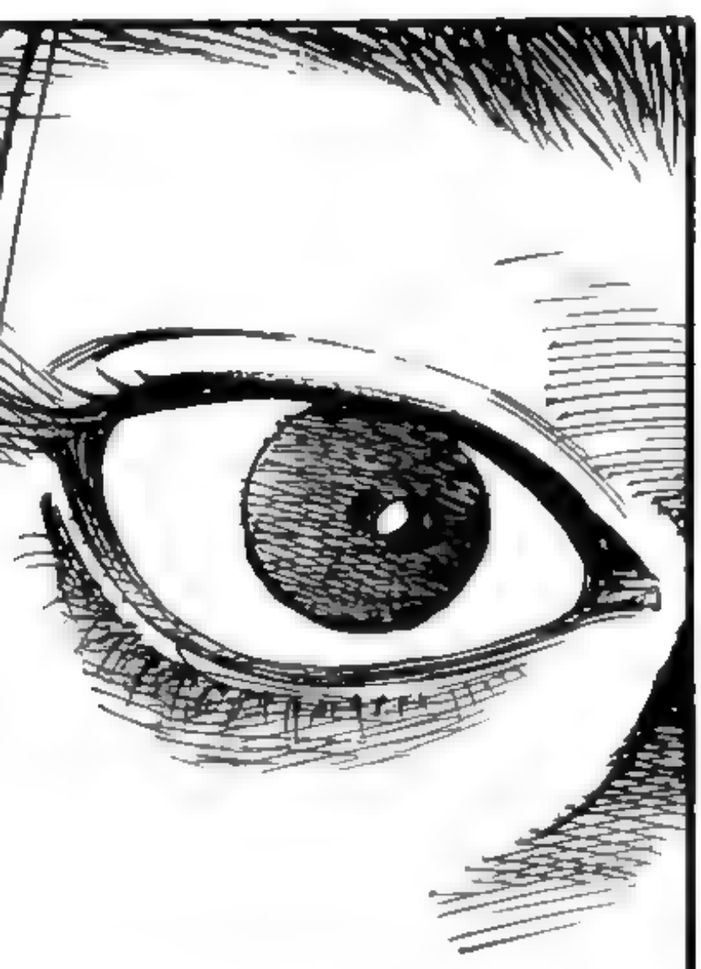


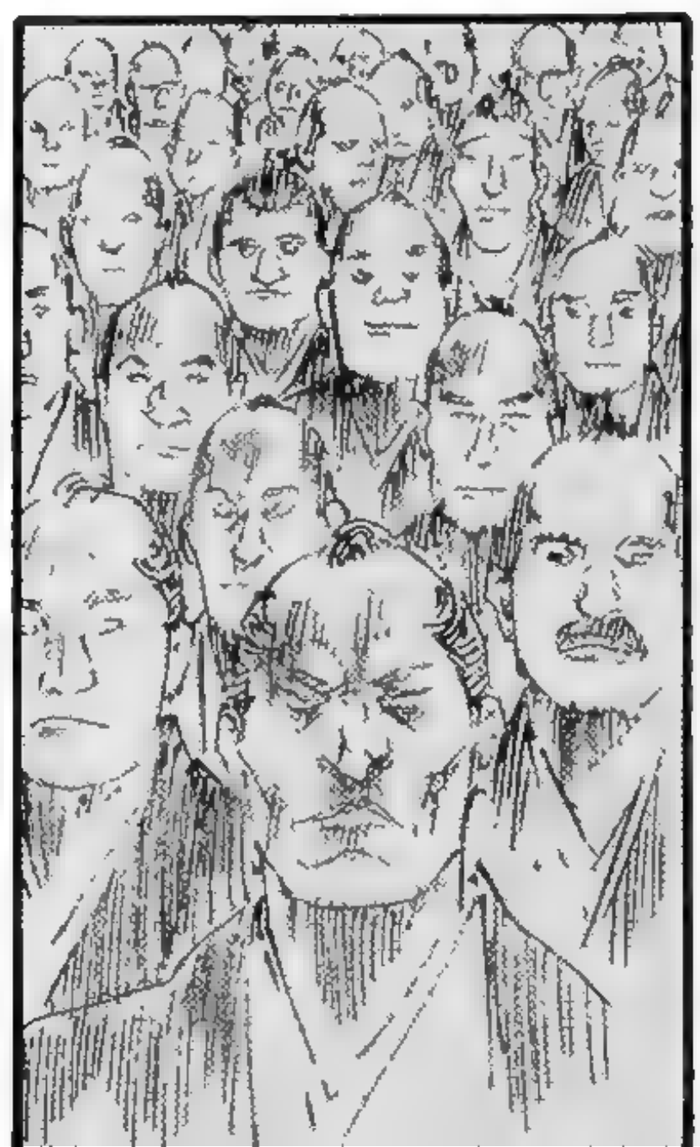
WOOSH
CULTIVATING ONE'S KI...

Y
A
H
H
H
THE BABY HAS ARRIVED, SIR.
平安
吉嶋拳法所出仕
吉嶋拳法
IT'S A BOY.
A BABY BOY.
AN HEIR TO THE YOSHIOKA CLAN.
(YOSHIOKA KEMPŌ)

FOLLOWING THE WAY...

PUTTING EVERY-THING INTO THE SWORD.





THMP-
THMP

HUF

HUF

.....

THMP

I CAN'T HELP BUT...

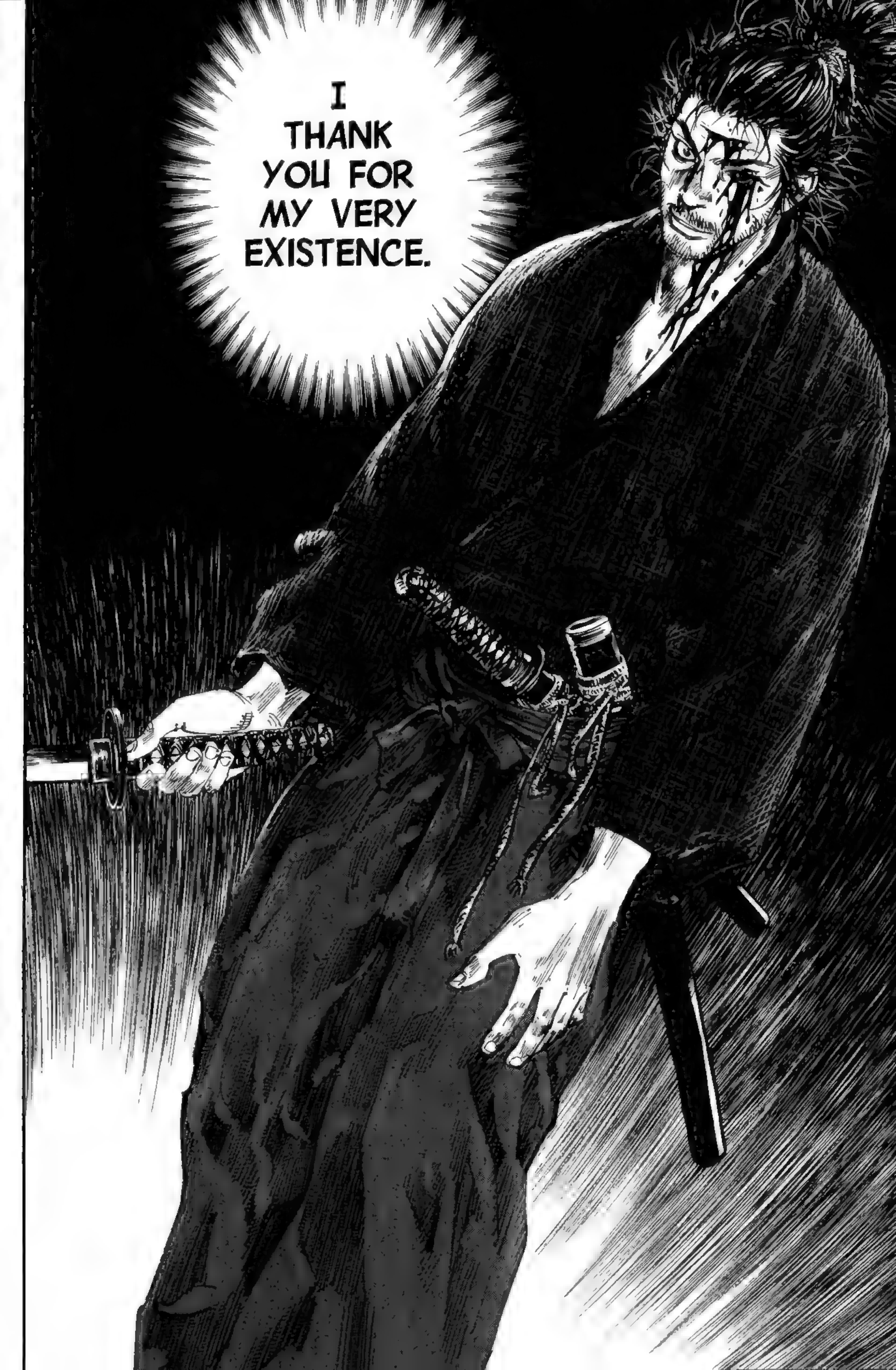
.....

I'M GRATEFUL FOR THIS LIFE.

THIS MAN...

I CAN PUT EVERYTHING I HAVE UP AGAINST HIM.

OH, GODS OF WAR...


I THANK YOU FOR MY VERY EXISTENCE.

HIS FOCUS DIVERTED BY THE WEIGHT OF HIS BURDEN...
IN THIS FLEETING MOMENT...
YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ WAS CUT DOWN AT RENDAIJI FIELD.

Vagabond

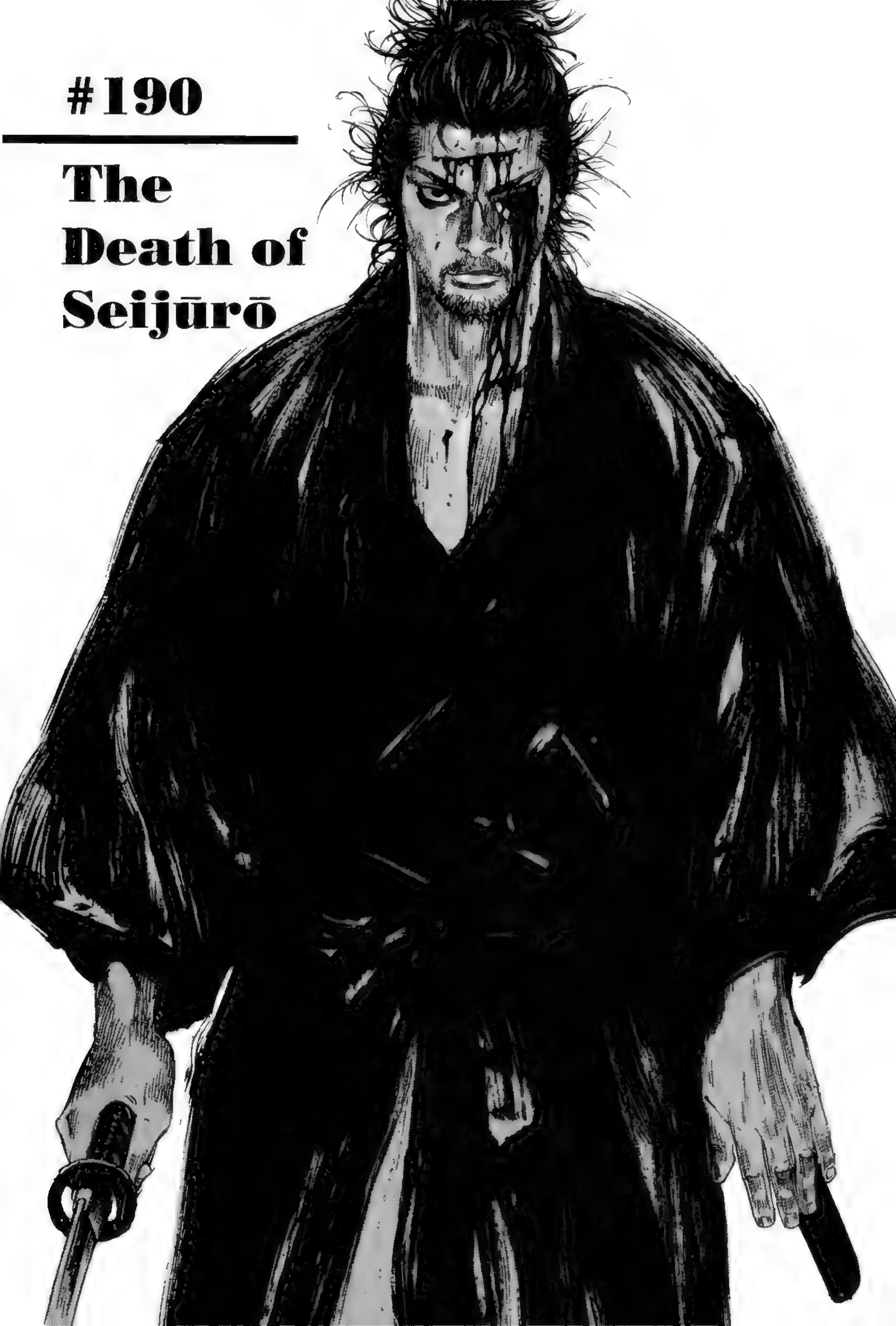
(TEN YEARS OLD)
10
才

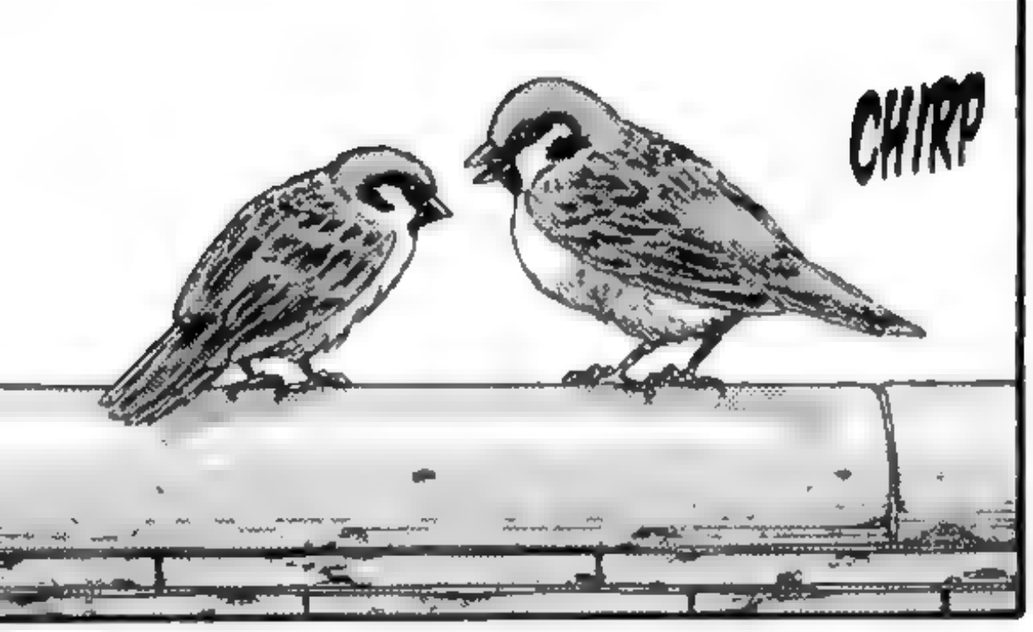
GASP!
!!

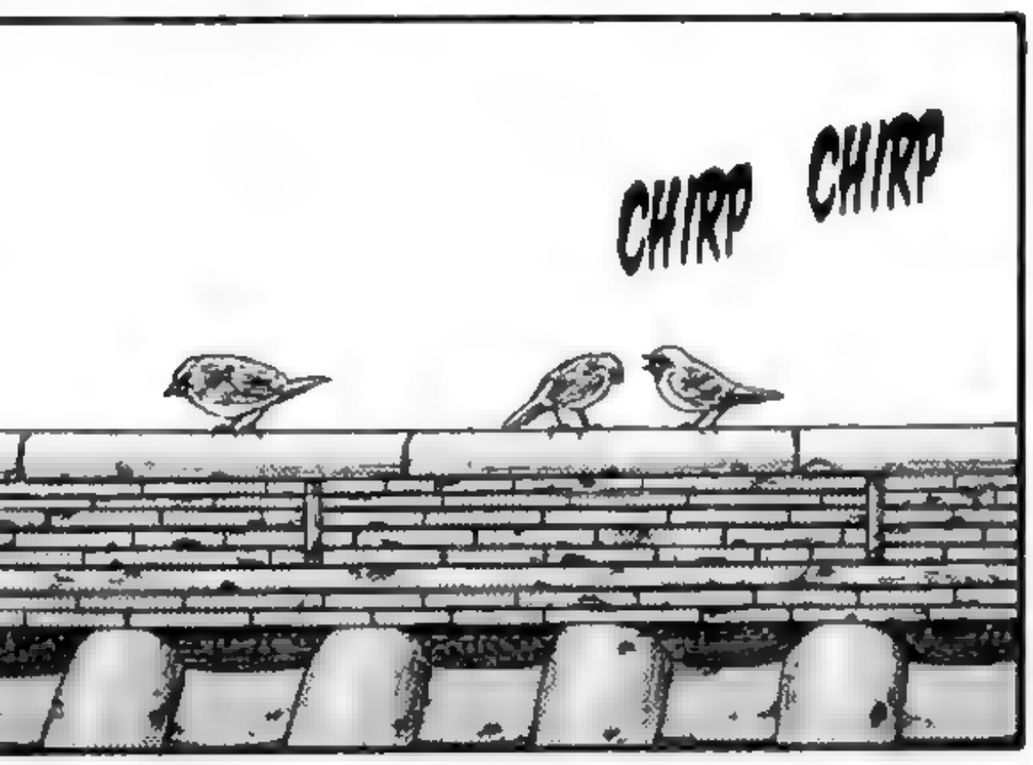
HUF
HUF

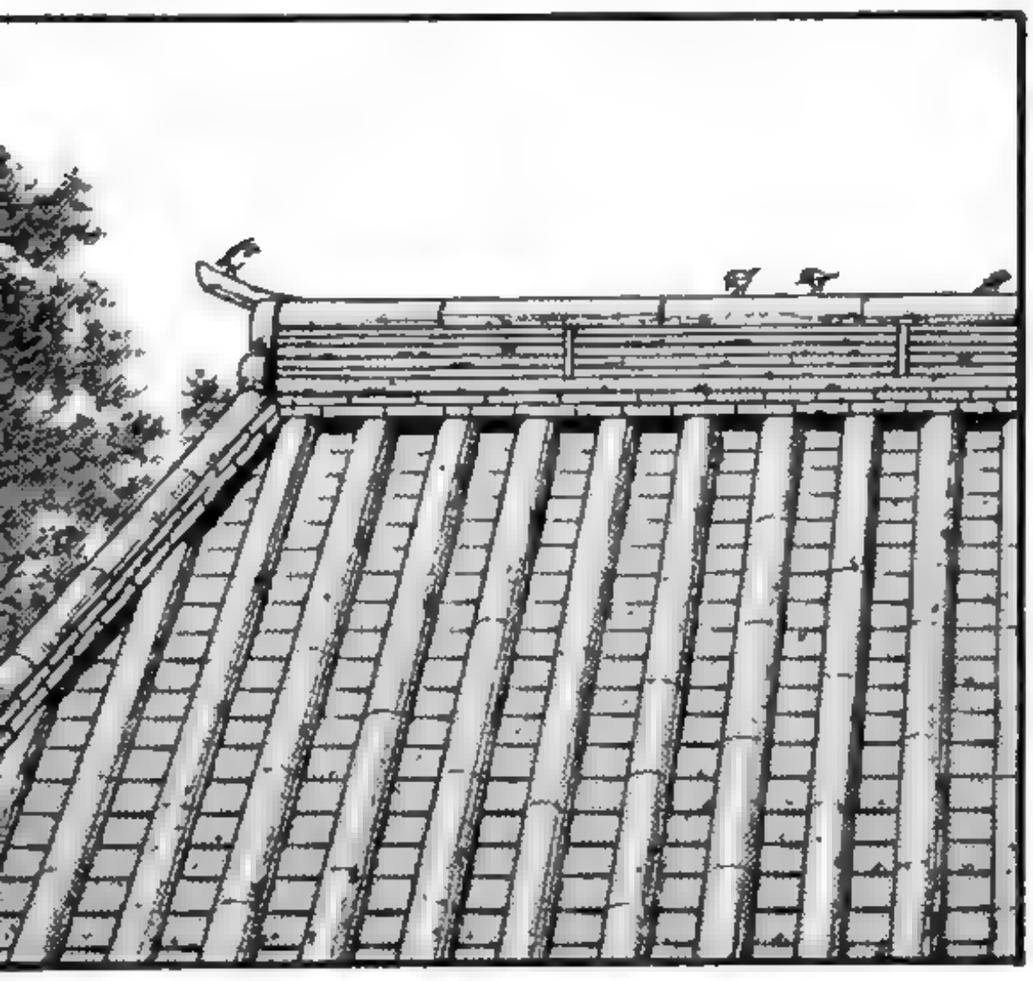
#190

The Death of Seijūrō




CHIRP


CHIRP CHIRP



CHIRP
CHIRP

YAWN...

NOD
UMF.

SO IT *WAS* POINTLESS WAITING FOR HIM.
HE'LL PROBABLY BE HOME IN THE AFTERNOON AS ALWAYS.

BRRR
AND IT'S FREEZ-ING!

IT'S MORN-ING...
DAMN...

REEKING OF PERFUME AND MAKEUP.
DENSHICHIRŌ SENSEI!
HMPH.
MORNING, YOICHI.

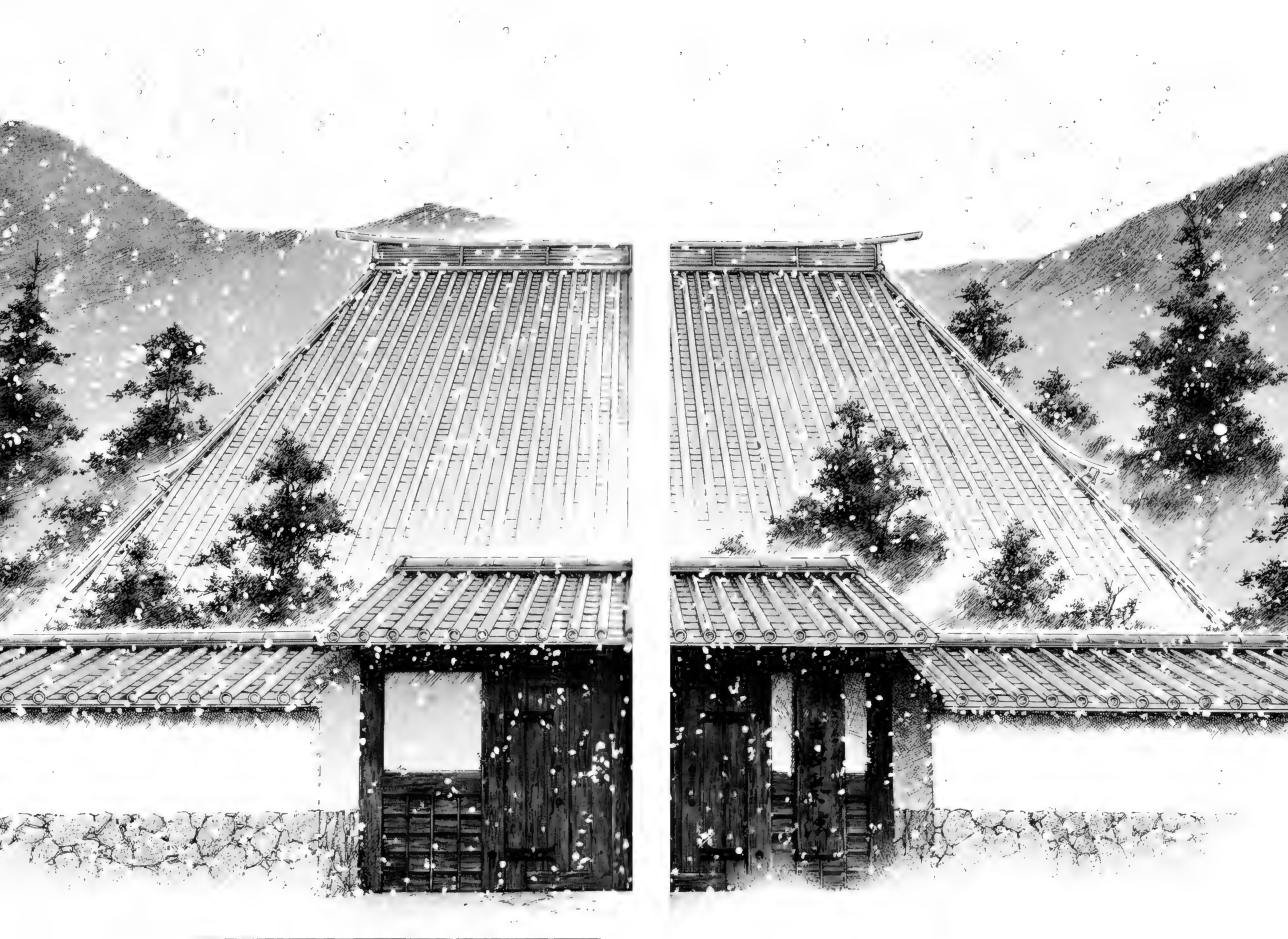
SEIJŪRŌ SENSEI IS...
SIR!!

HMM ?

WHEN MY BROTHER RETURNS, YOU BRING HIM HERE EVEN IF YOU HAVE TO DRAG HIM BY THE SCRUFF OF HIS NECK.
I'M GOING TO TRAIN WITH HIM!
DON'T LET HIM GET AWAY.
I'M GOING TO TAKE A NAP.

WHAT IS IT, YOICHI?

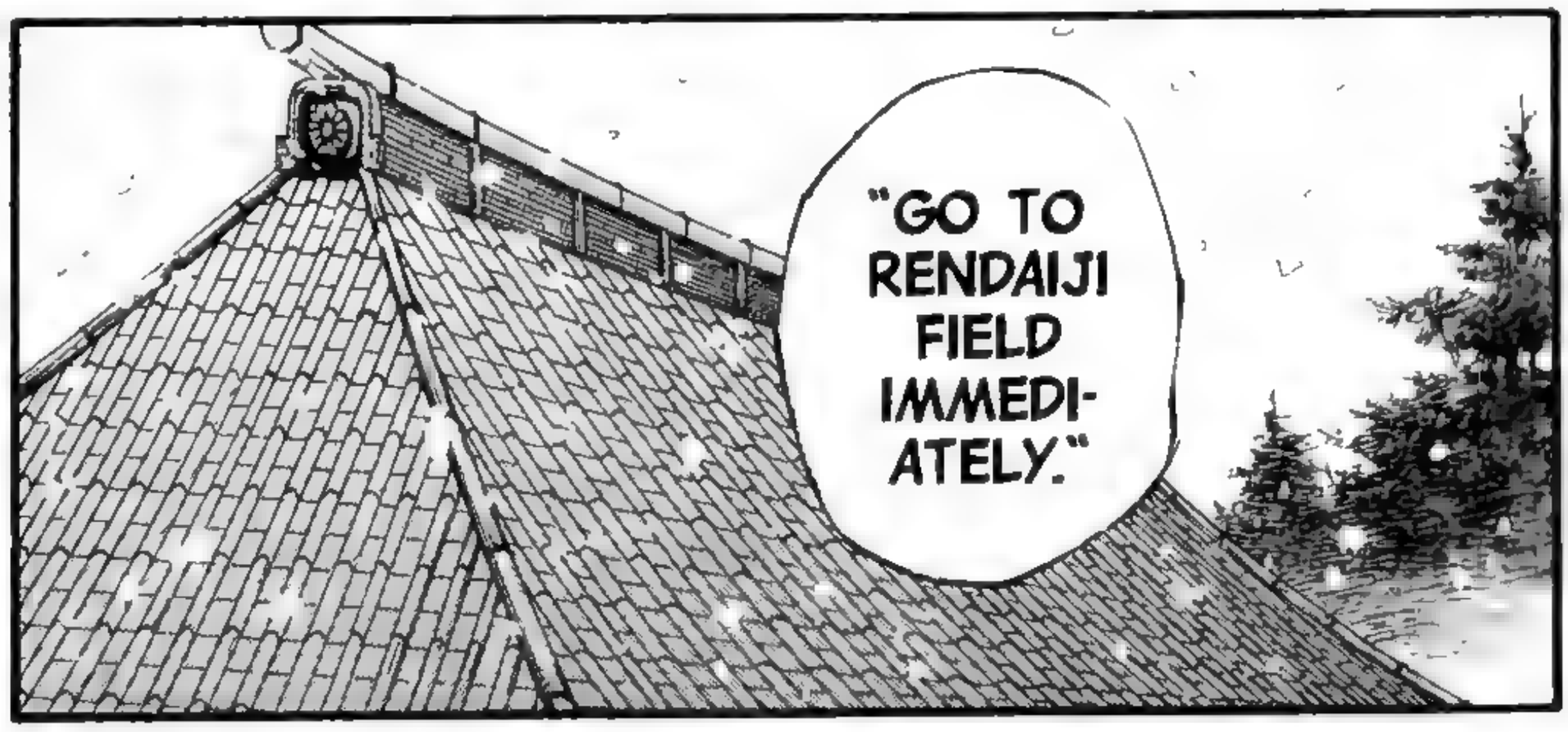
HE'S...



HOW COULD HE HAVE BEEN CUT DOWN?
I DON'T UNDER-STAND.
THIS CAN'T BE TRUE...

武蔵

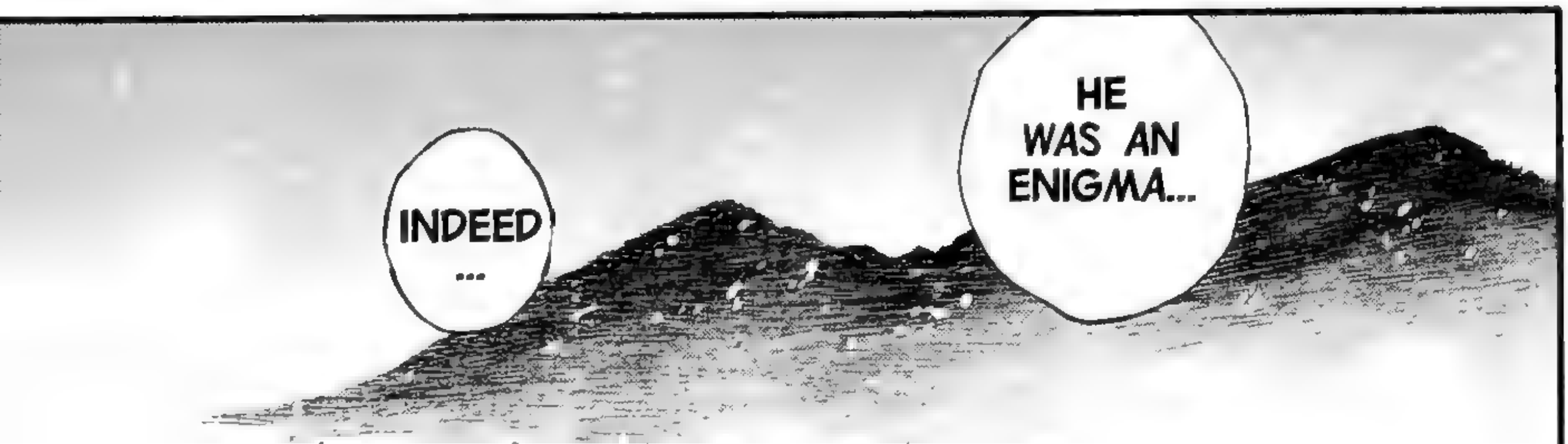
(MUSASHI)


"GO TO RENDAIJI FIELD IMMEDIATELY."

WHY DID HE FIGHT MUSASHI ?
DEN-SHICHIRŌ WAS SUPPOSED TO FIGHT HIM IN A MATTER OF DAYS.
I DON'T GET IT.

BLOOD ...
AND IT'S FRESH.
IT MUST HAVE HAPPENED LAST NIGHT...

SO YOU FOUND THIS POSTED AT THE ENTRANCE.
PASS IT HERE, KURAN-DO.
YES, THIS MORNING WHILE I WAS SWEEPING.


HE WAS AN ENIGMA...
INDEED ...

AND SOON THE RUMORS TOUCHED UPON THE TRUTH.

BUT SECRETS ALWAYS HAVE A WAY OF LEAKING.

IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT SEIJŪRŌ'S DEATH WAS CAUSED BY AN ILLNESS.

THE NEWS WOULD HAVE CAUSED IRREPARABLE DAMAGE TO THE DISTINGUISHED YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.

BUT...

IN ANY CASE, NO ONE MUST FIND OUT ABOUT THIS!!

IT'S INCON-CEIVABLE.

BESIDES, HE WAS FIGHTING AGAINST OUR MASTER.

HOW COULD YOU...CUT SOME-ONE LIKE THAT? EVEN CHOPPING OFF AN ARM REQUIRES SUCH GREAT SKILL AND FORCE.

IF MUSASHI REALLY DID DO THIS...

...DID MUSASHI REALLY KILL HIM?

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

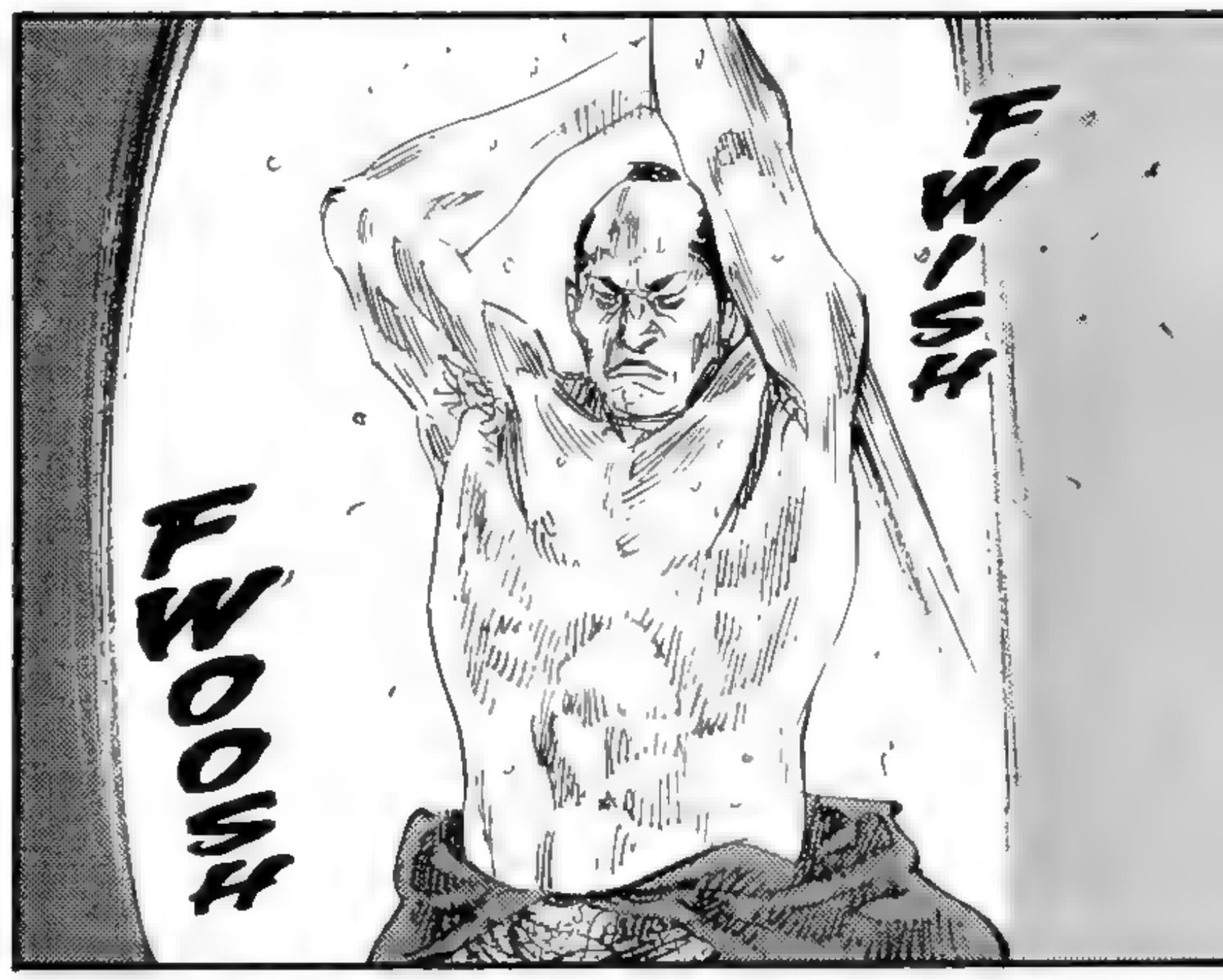
THUNK
HAH !
FWISH
HAH !
FOOM
YAH !
HAH !
FWISH
HAH !

DON'T RELY ON BRUTE STRENGTH...

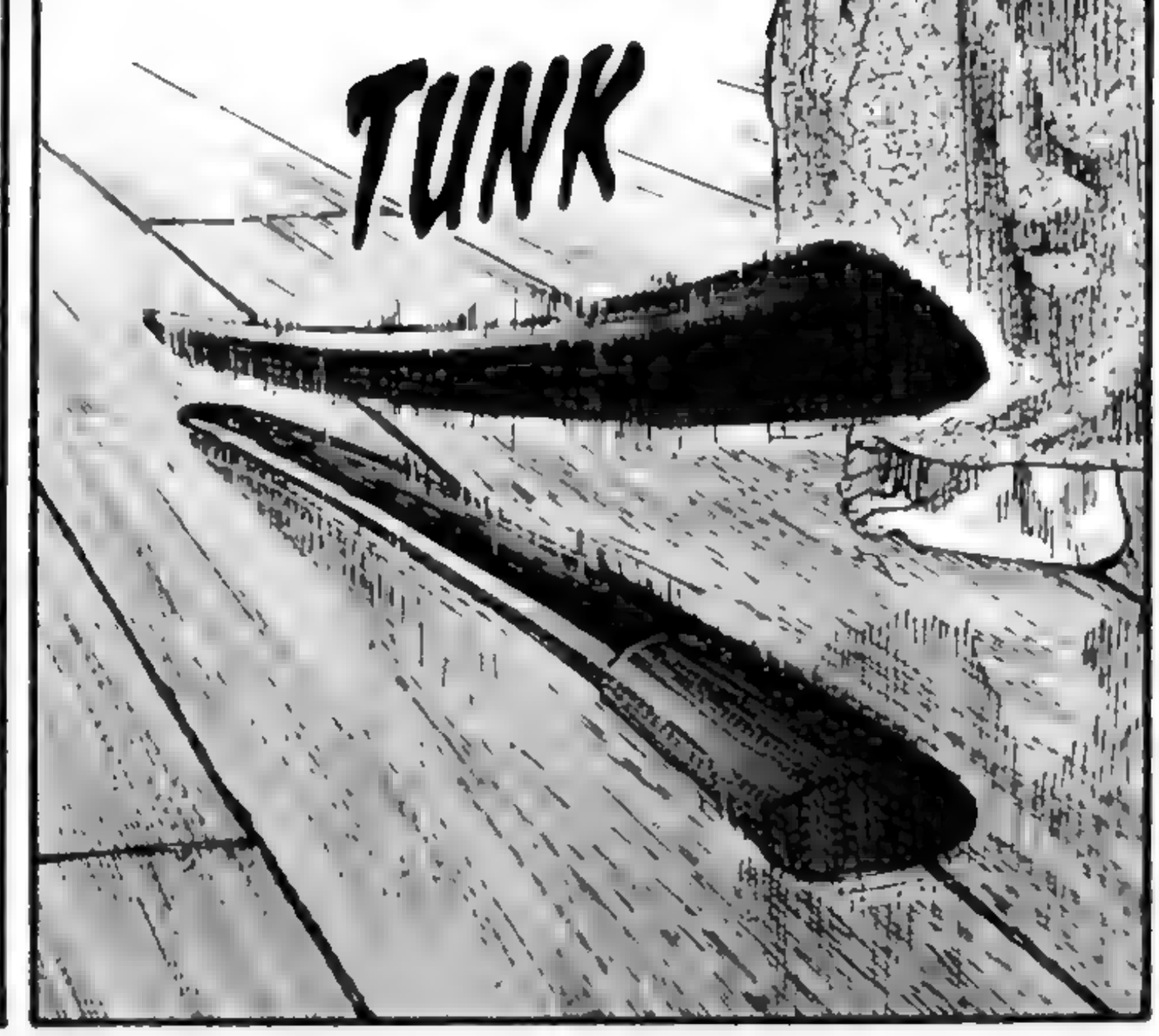
HUF

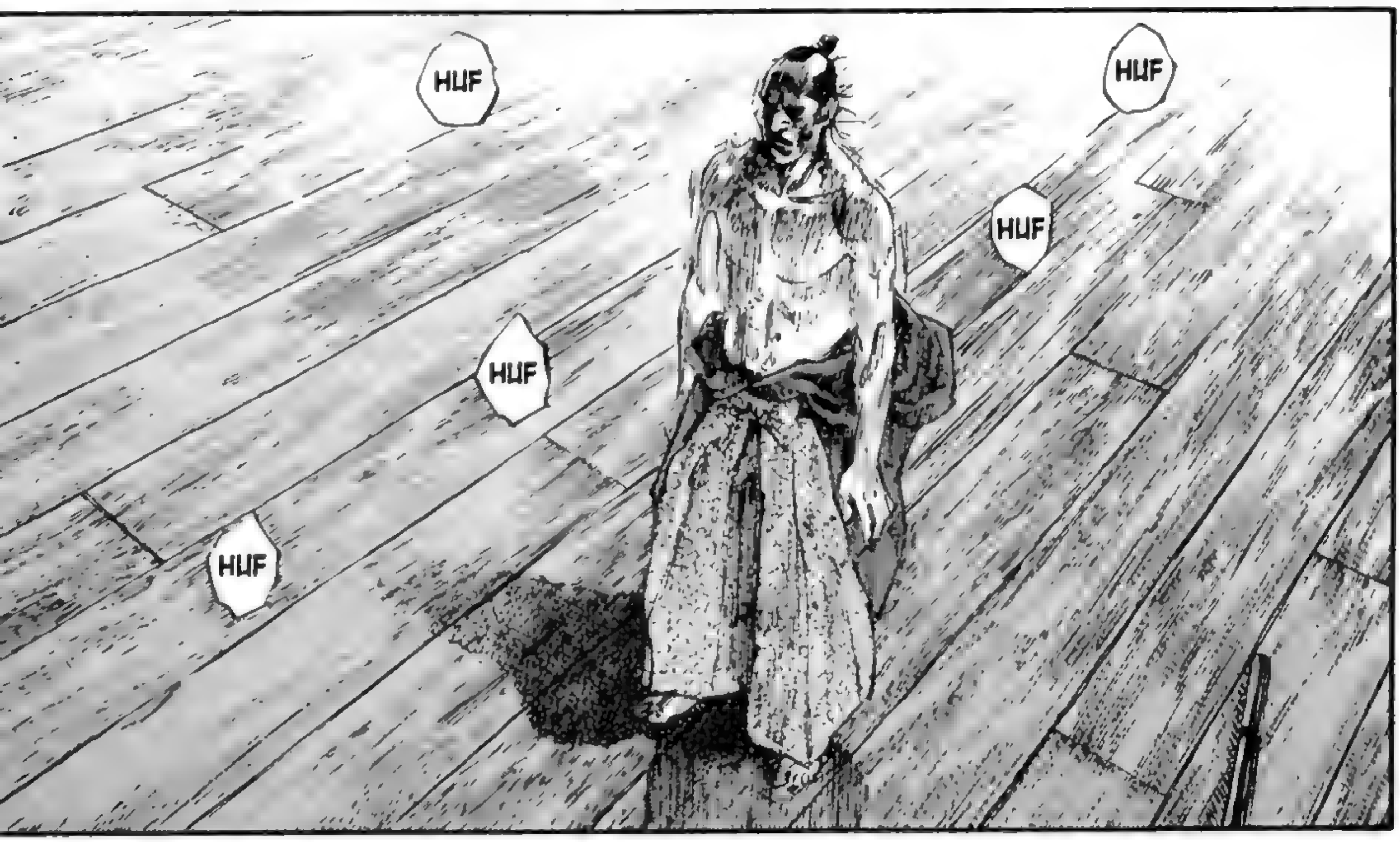
HUF

...JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE BIG.



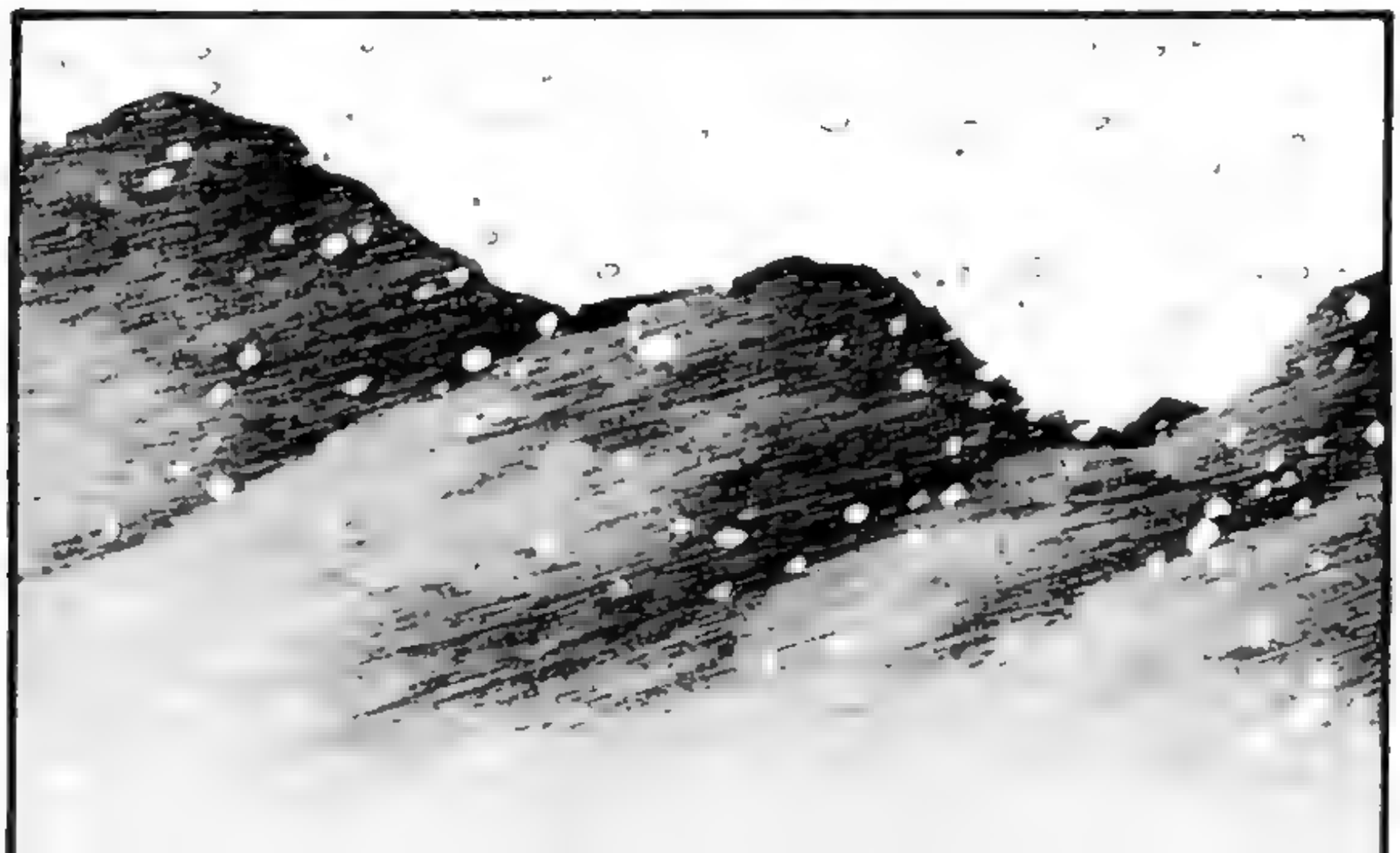
KLATTA-
KLATTA


TUNK

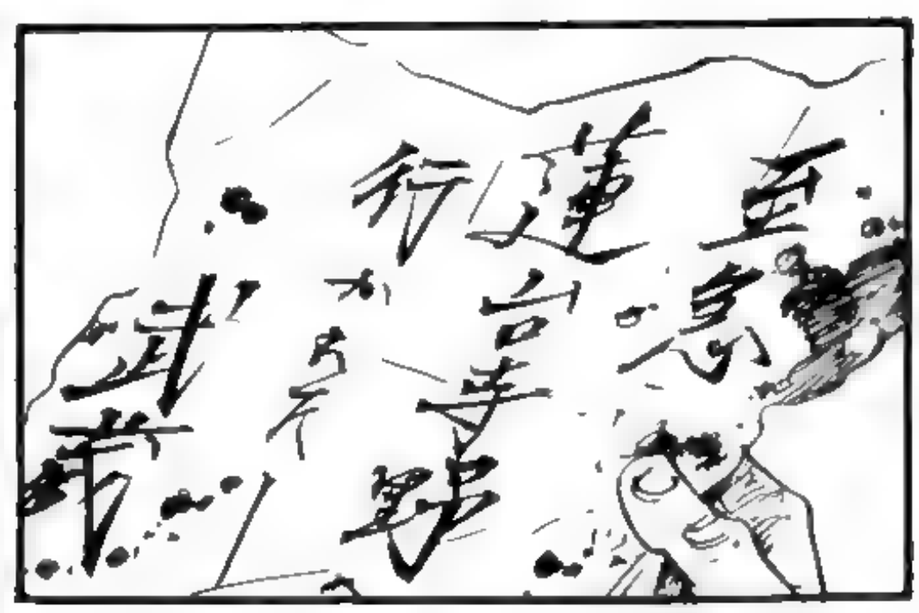

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF
HUF
WHAT ELSE WAS THERE?
HUF

WHAT ELSE WOULD YOU TELL ME, SEIJŪRŌ ?



Vagabond



(GO TO RENDAIJI FIELD IMMEDIATELY.)

#191 Painting with Water

HM?

FWP
SPLISH
PLSH
PLSH
TING
KRICH

A SWORD WOUND...

AND WHO WAS UNFORTUNATE ENOUGH TO BE CUT DOWN BY YOU SO EARLY IN THE NEW YEAR?

YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ...

...

AMAZING!

GOOD ONE.

HA HA HA HA!

ZWOOP

KRICH

KRICH

...

...

ZWIP

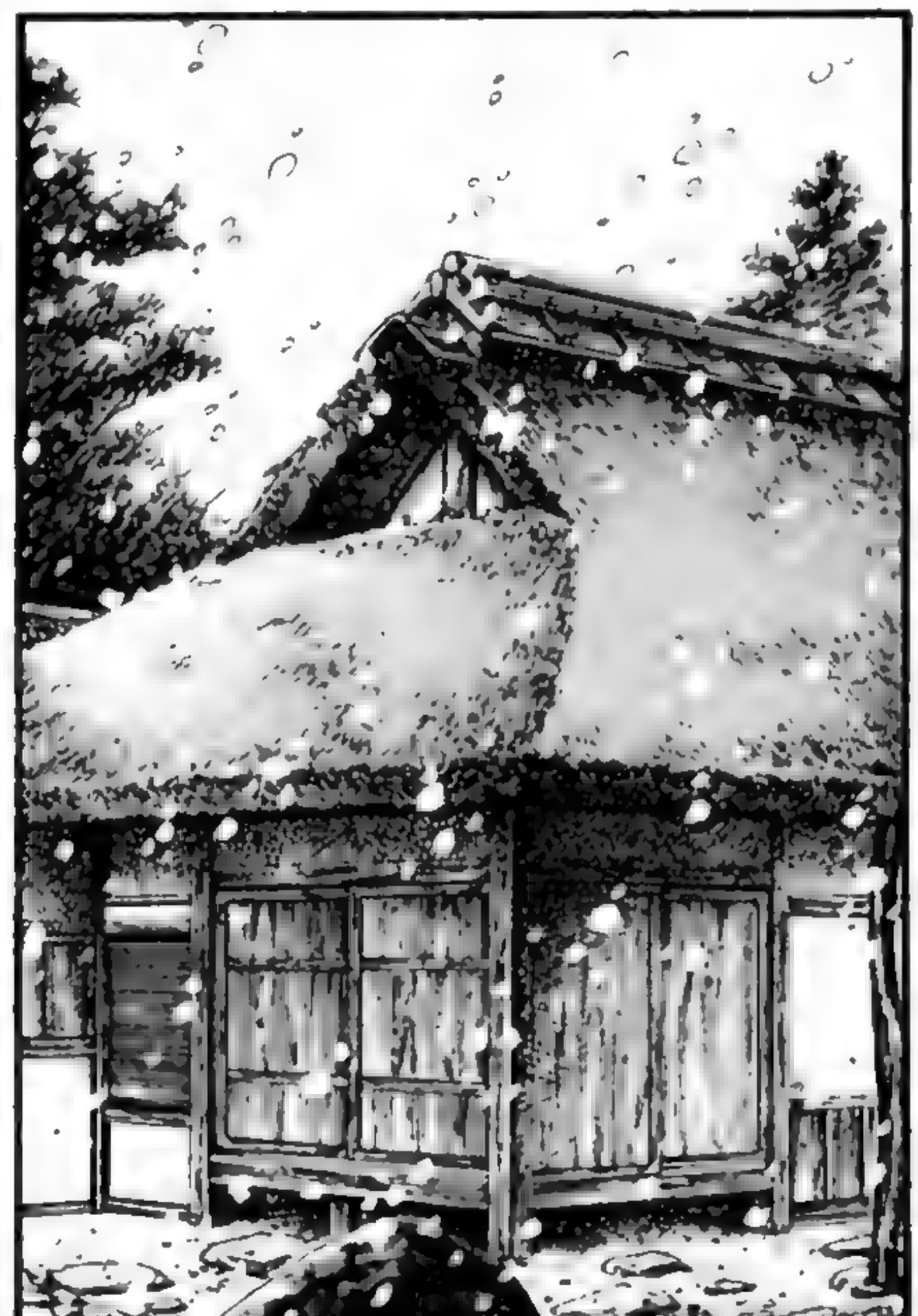
...
KRICH

UMM...

...YOU WOULD HAVE SOME SPACE WHERE I MIGHT REST? A STORAGE SHED, MAYBE?
PERHAPS...

FWMP
AHEM.

HUH?



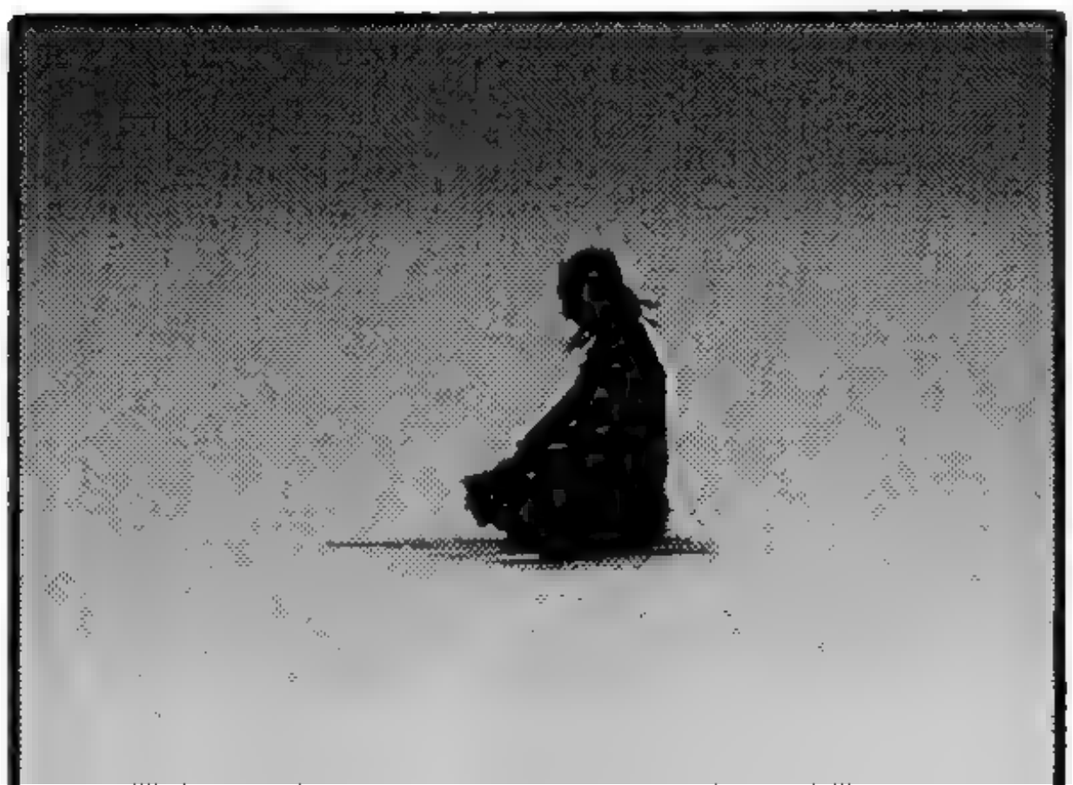
KŌETSU, I'M NOT SURE YOU SHOULD WELCOME THAT RŌNIN HERE.

...I SUPPOSE I'M THE SAME AS HIM...
I KNOW I'M ALSO ANOTHER DRIFTER...

...
GLEAM
YES...

HE LOOKS VERY SUSPICIOUS.
YOU EVEN ATTENDED TO HIS WOUNDS...
I MEAN LOOK AT HIM.

HE'S SLEEPING WELL.

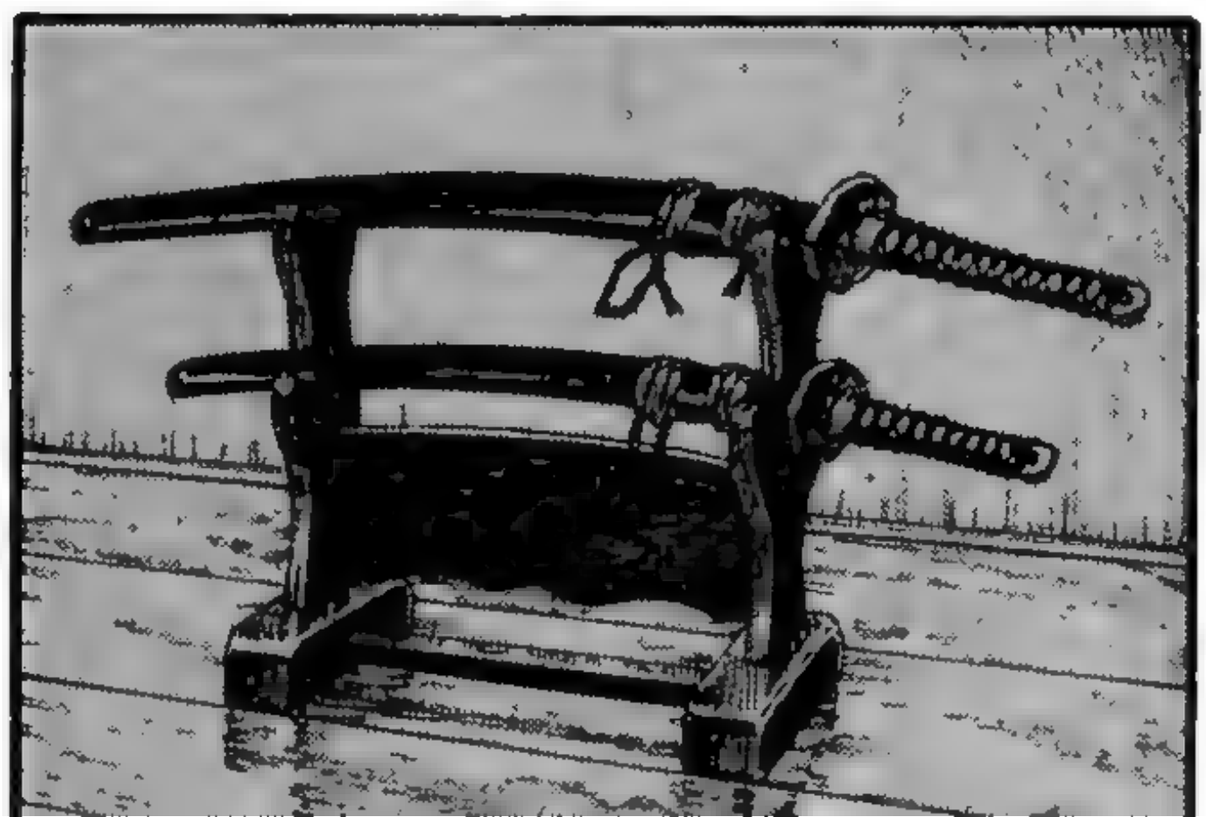


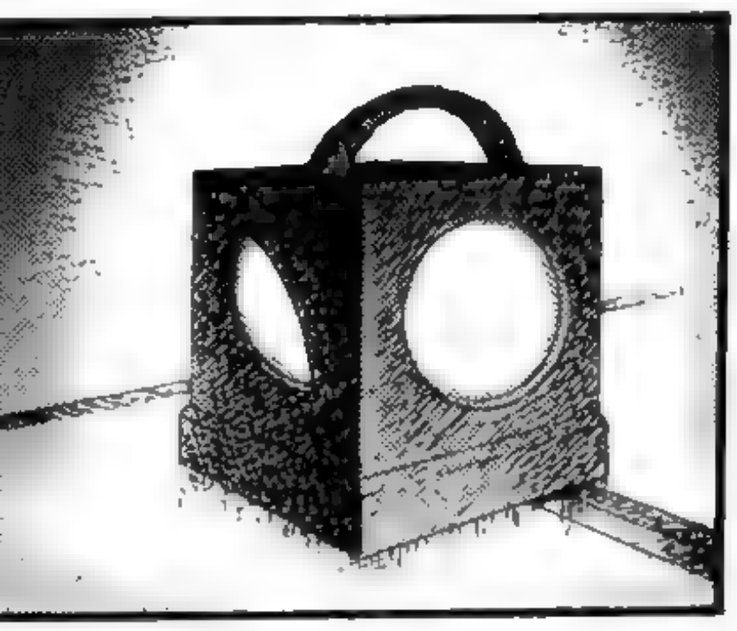
LOOKS LIKE IT'LL SNOW THROUGH THE NIGHT.

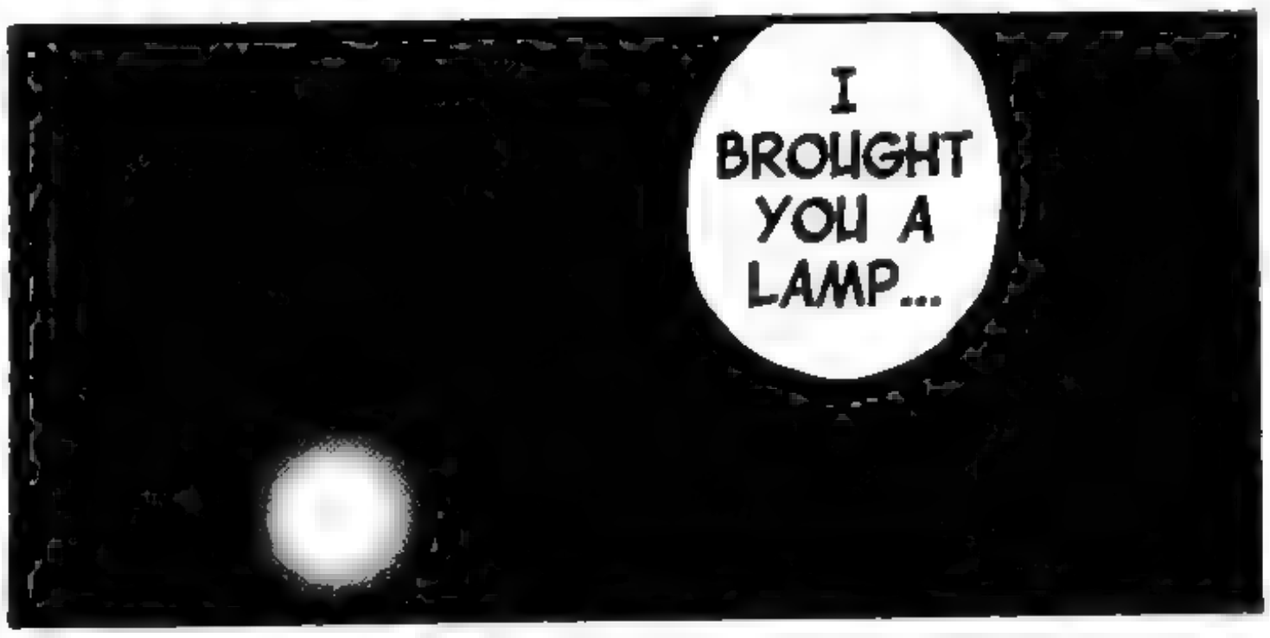
MY SWORD DISAPPEARED.

AND...

...SO DID MY ARM...






I BROUGHT YOU A LAMP...

THERE'S NO POINT IN GETTING TO KNOW SOMEONE YOU'RE ABOUT TO KILL.

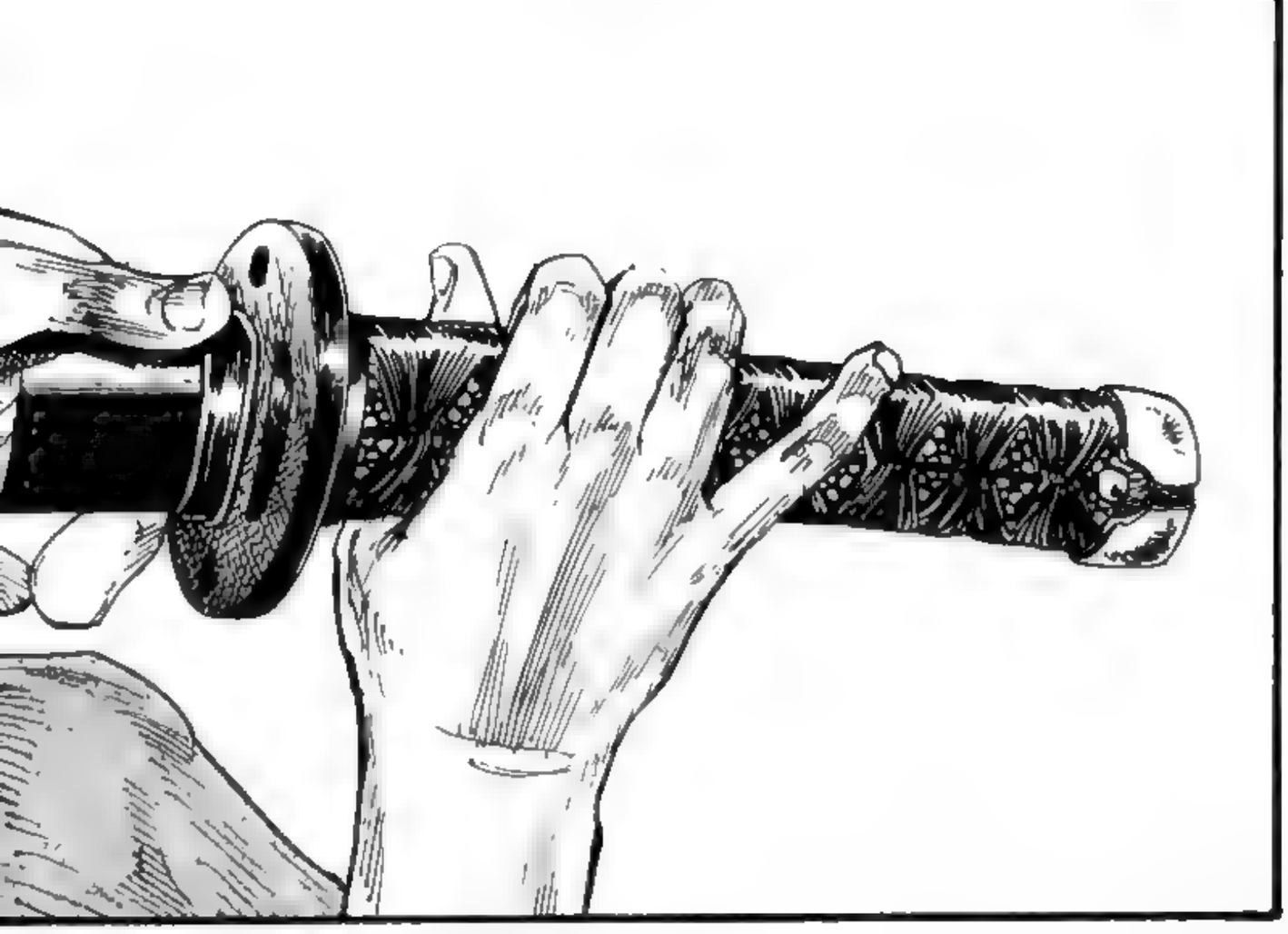
IT'S STRANGE...

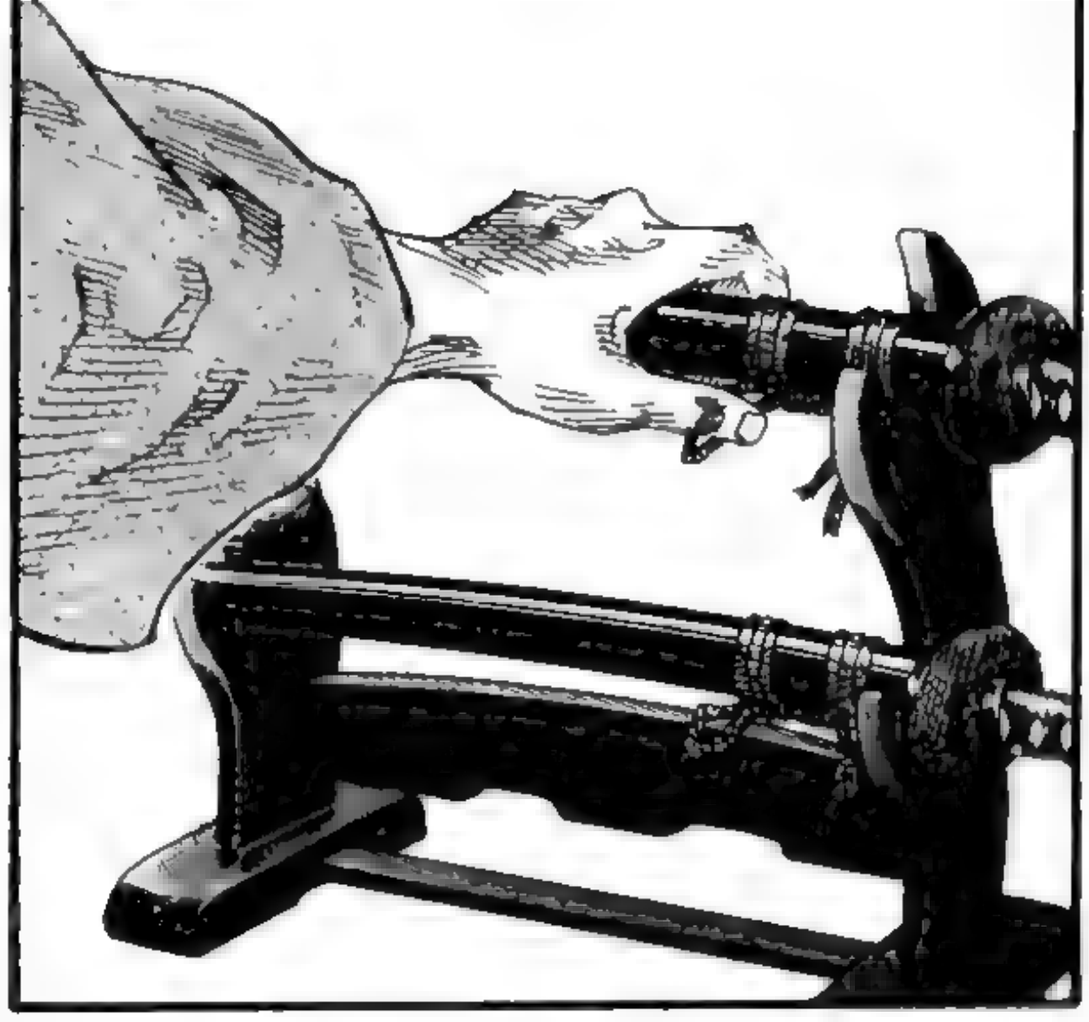
BUT I DO UNDERSTAND YOUR URGE TO TALK.

ONE FIGHT IS OVER, THAT'S ALL.

YOU CUT DOWN A MAN, NOTHING MORE.

DON'T LINGER ON THIS VICTORY.





THIS LIFE OF CUTTING DOWN MAN AFTER MAN...

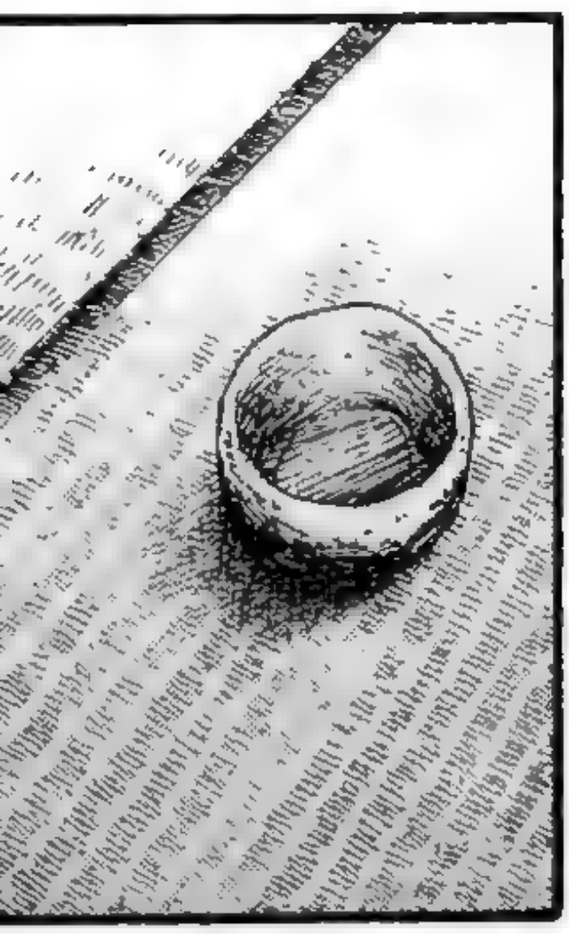
THAT'S THE SPIRAL OF KILLING WHICH IS YOUR DAY-TO-DAY EXISTENCE.

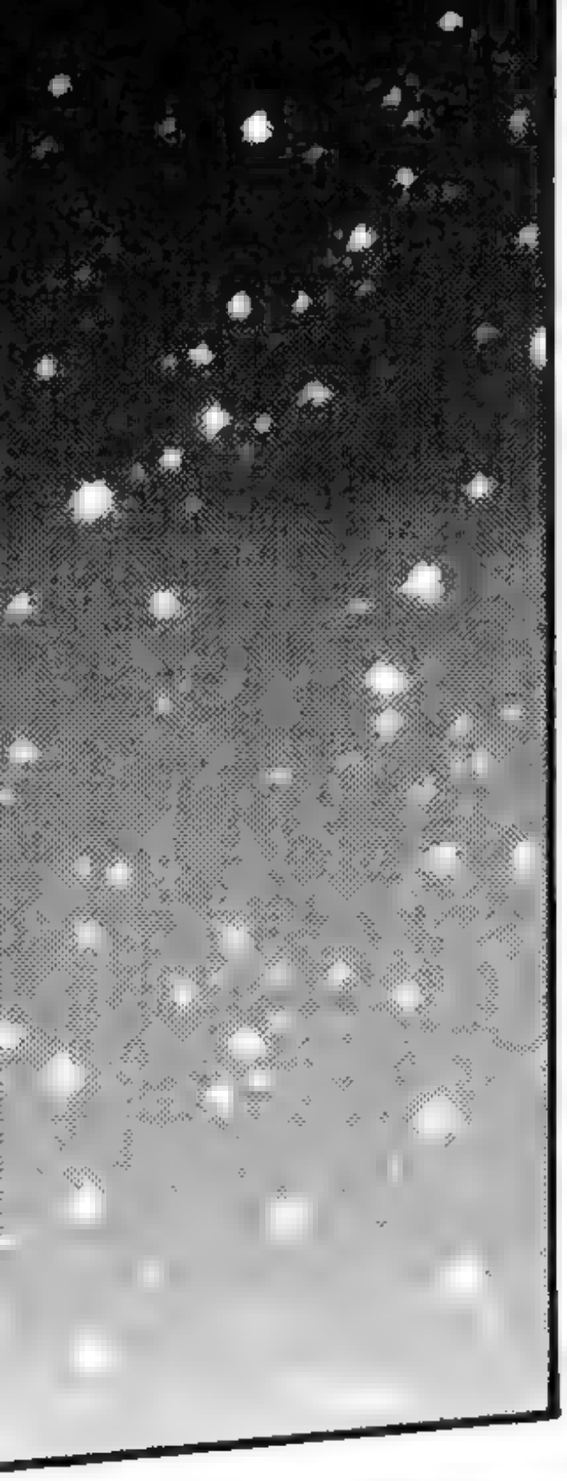
PERFECTING YOUR SKILLS...
STRIVING TO LISTEN TO YOUR OWN BODY'S TRUTH...

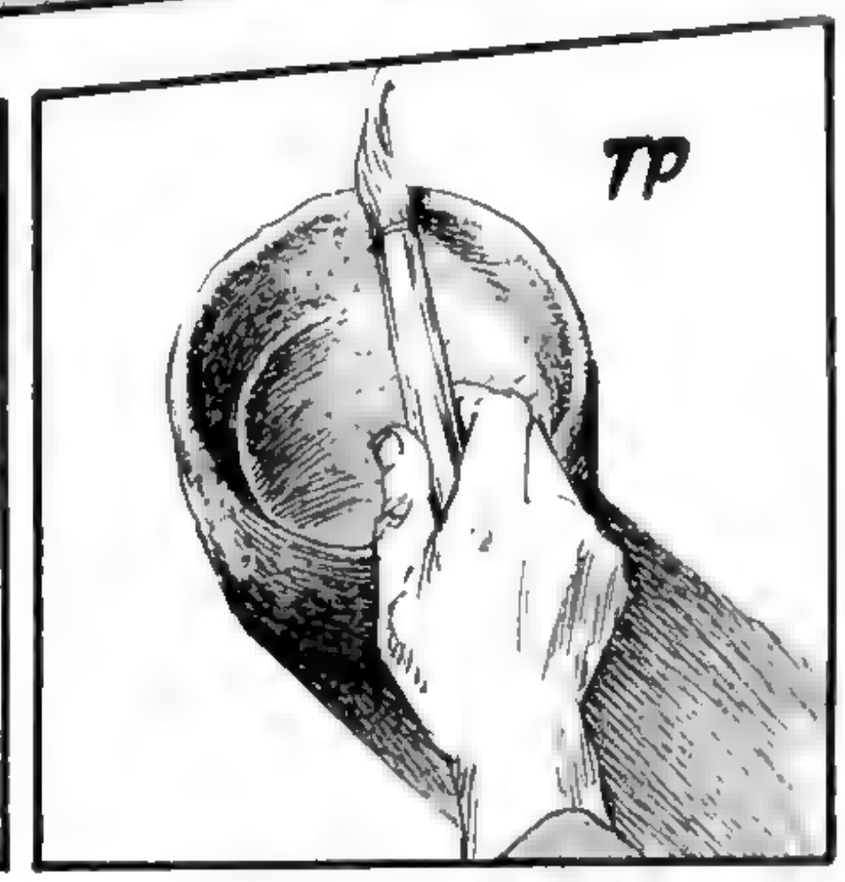
THINK ONLY ABOUT YOUR ART.

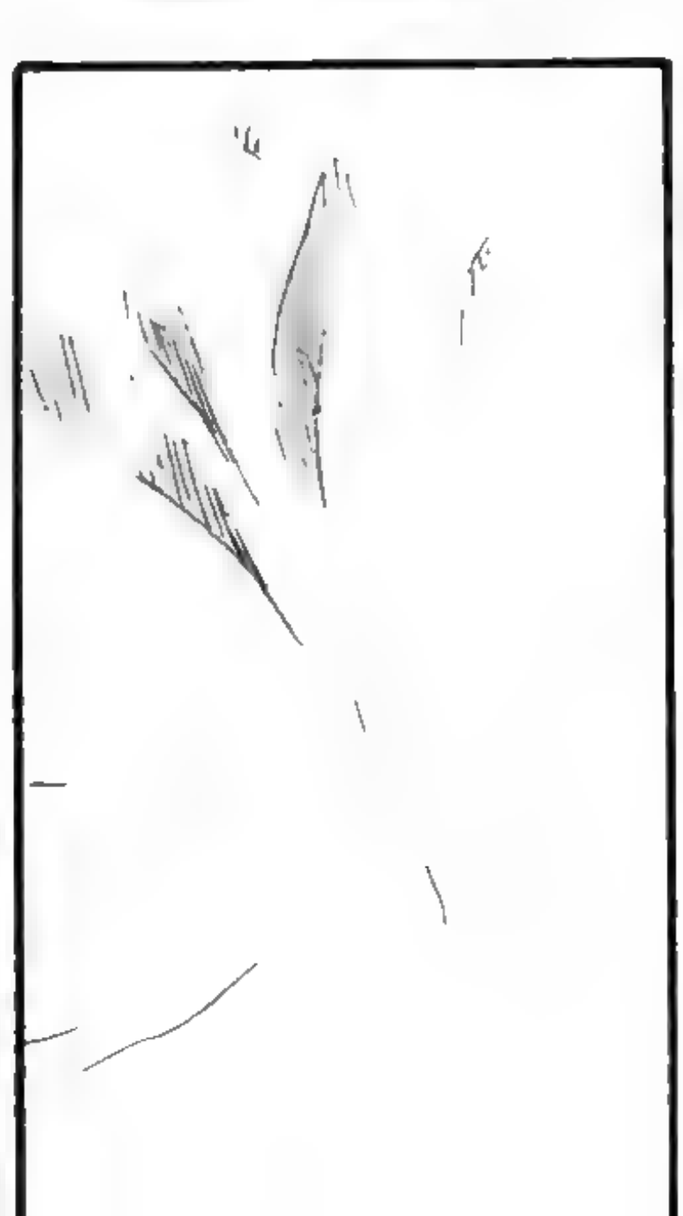
MNCH

MNCH






TP



I BEAT YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ.

I THOUGHT I'D FEEL HAPPIER ABOUT IT.

Vagabond

¥10000000

#192

Kōetsu and Myōshū

THE TENTH YEAR OF THE KEICHŌ ERA BEGAN.

MRRMRR...

THE RONIN, MIYAMOTO MUSASHI!!

YOU MEAN, MUSASHI ?!

THAT'S RIGHT.

THE ONE EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT.

THAT RONIN.

MRRMRR...

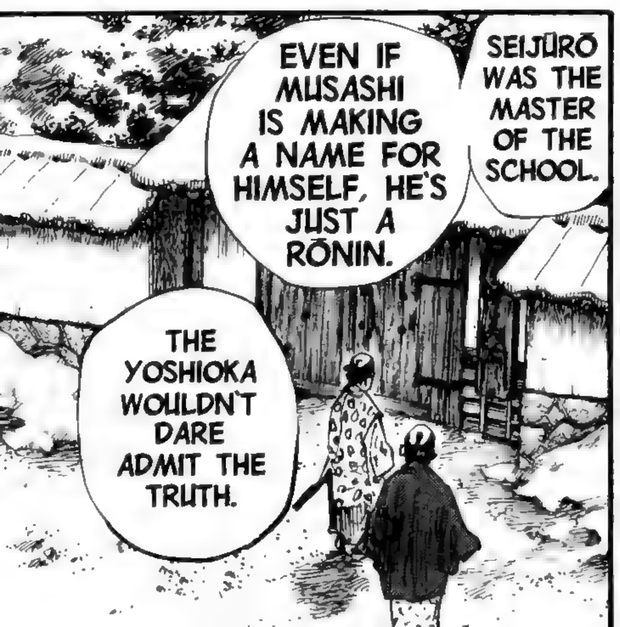
WHO DID IT!?

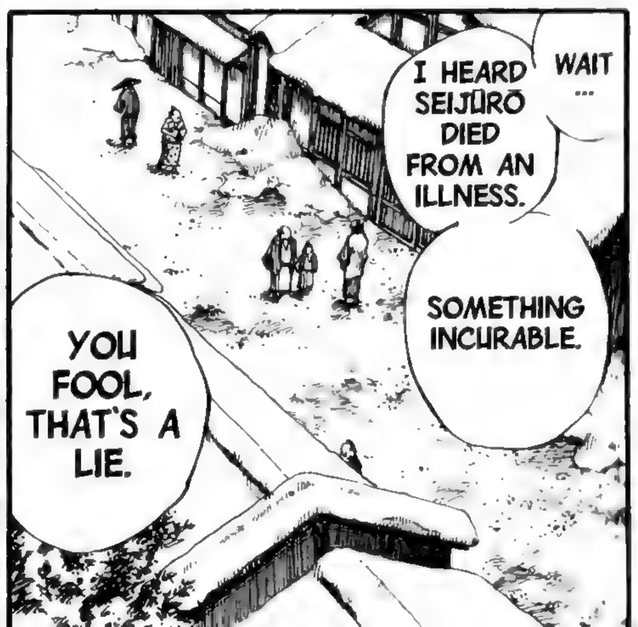
MRRMRR...

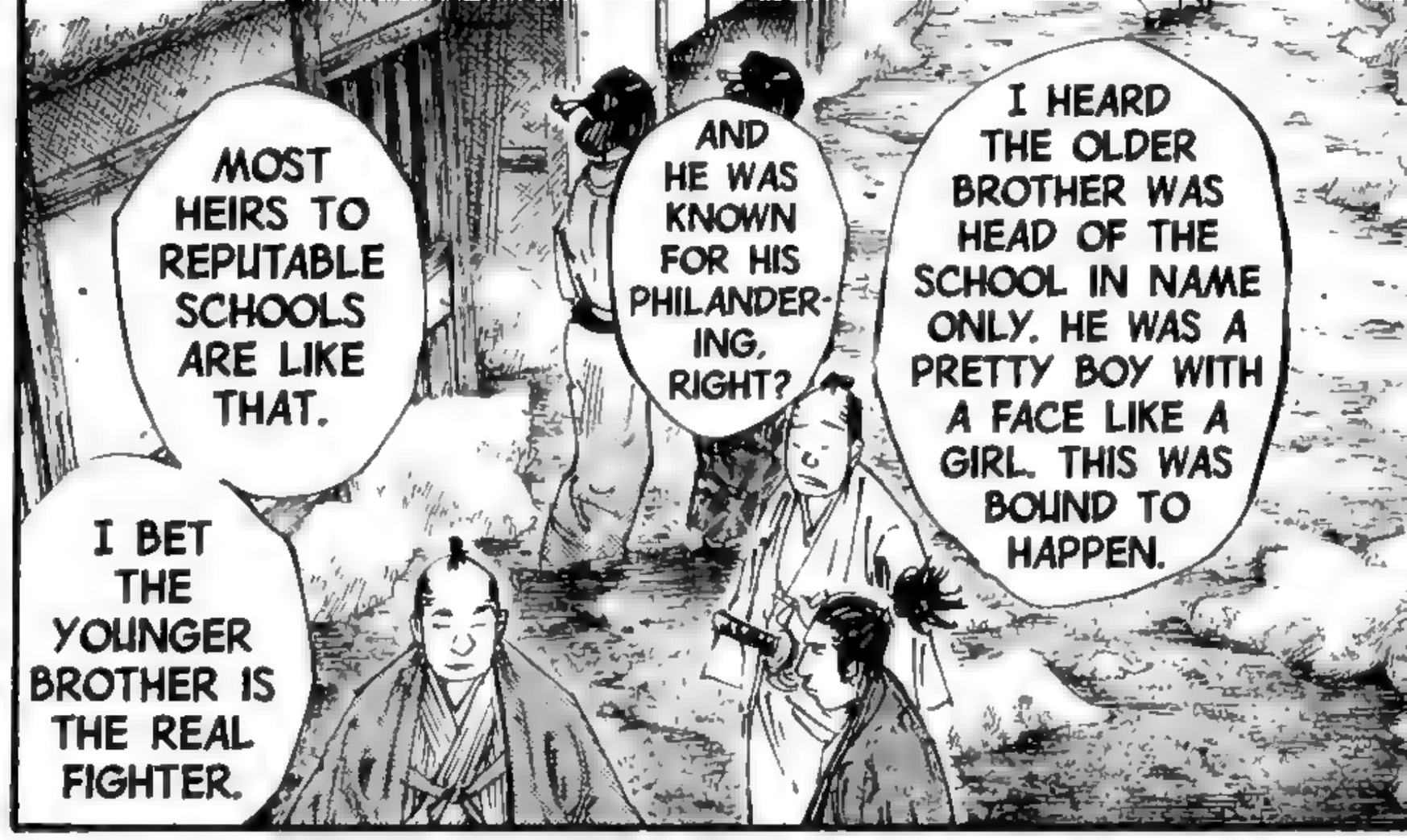
THAT CAN'T BE.

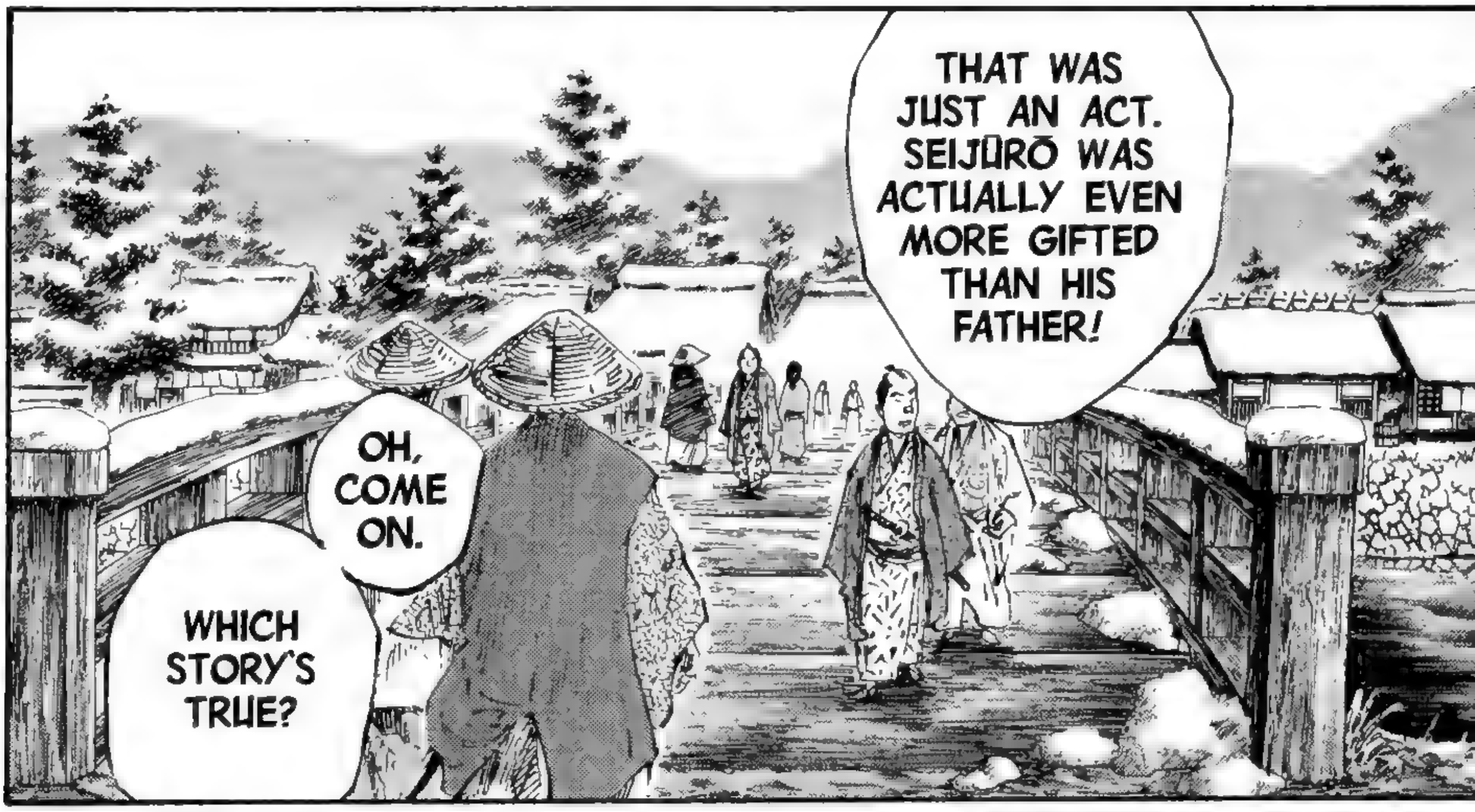
WHAT ?!

YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ'S BEEN CUT DOWN!!





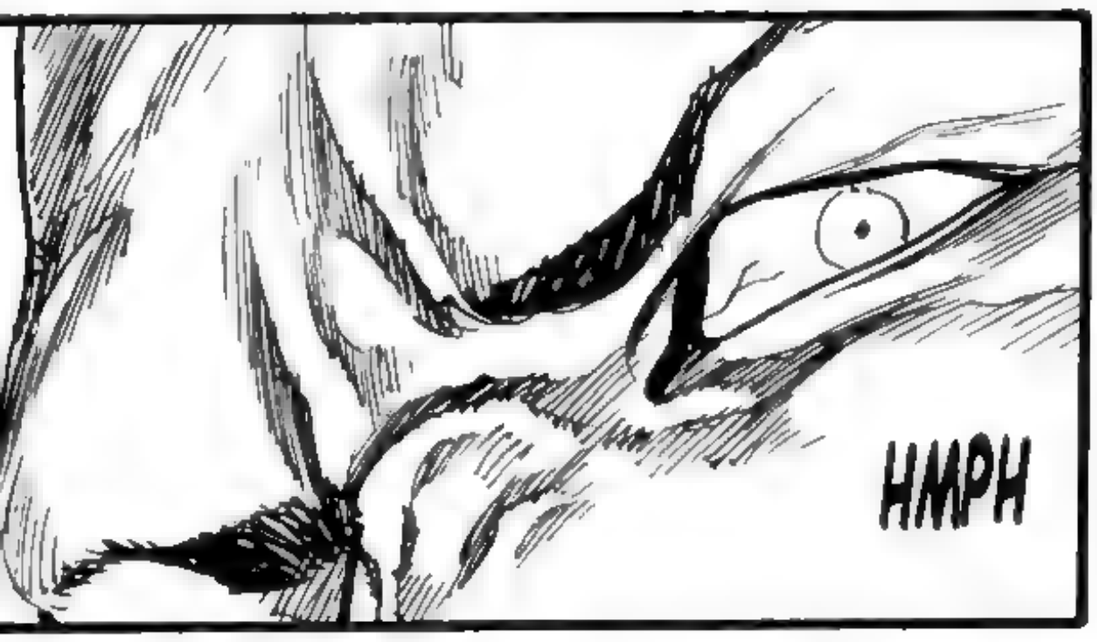




ONE RUMOR BROUGHT ON ANOTHER, AND THEN...

MUSASHI!

KRICH



I'M GOING TO FIGHT MUSASHI!!

YOU CAN'T HIDE, RŌNIN.

COME OUT, MUSASHI!

ANYONE WHO KILLS MUSASHI WILL GAIN IMMEDIATE NOTORIETY.

I'M GOING TO GET TO HIM BEFORE ANYONE ELSE DOES.

HA HA HA.

THAT'S A GOOD ONE!

HELL, THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL MIGHT EVEN GIVE ME A REWARD!

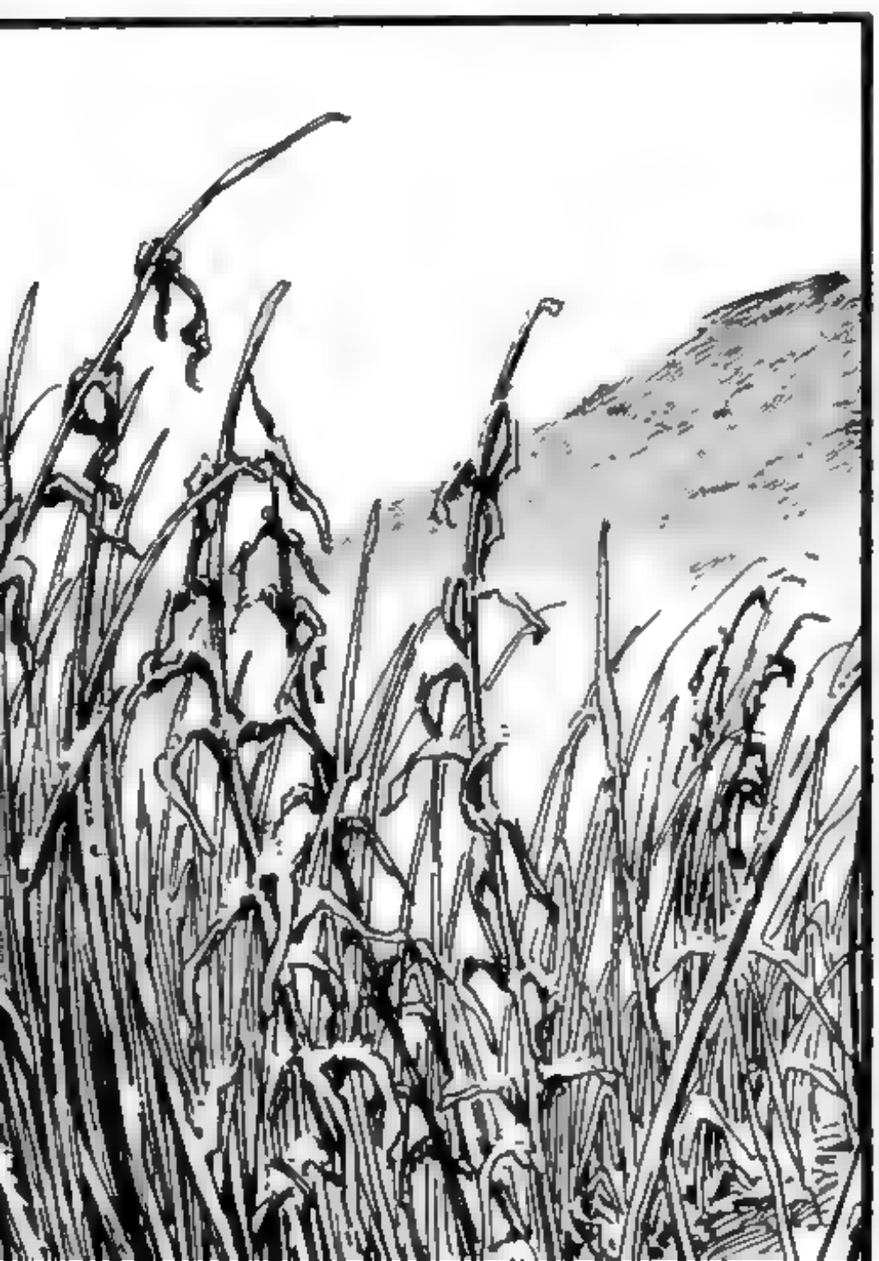
FORGET ABOUT THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL...

WHAT I WANT IS MUSASHI'S HEAD.

HUH?

FICH
HEY!

LET'S GO FOR A WALK.
WHAT?



LET'S TAKE A WALK THAT WAY.

WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
THAT'S NOT IMPORTANT.

THUNK

HE GOT CUT DOWN ....!!

.....

I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO KILL THIS RŌNIN I ENCOUNTERED.

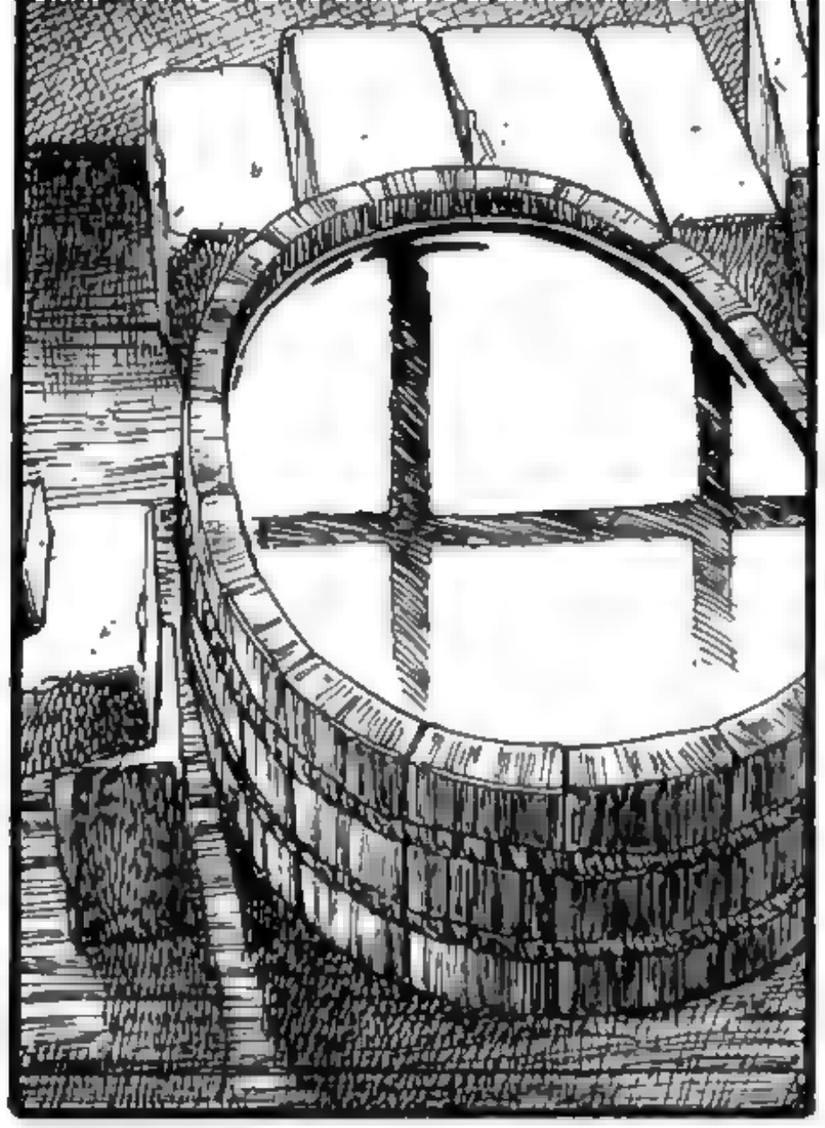
I AM MIIKE JŪRŌZAEMON, ONE OF THE TEN SWORDSMEN OF THE YOSHIOKA.

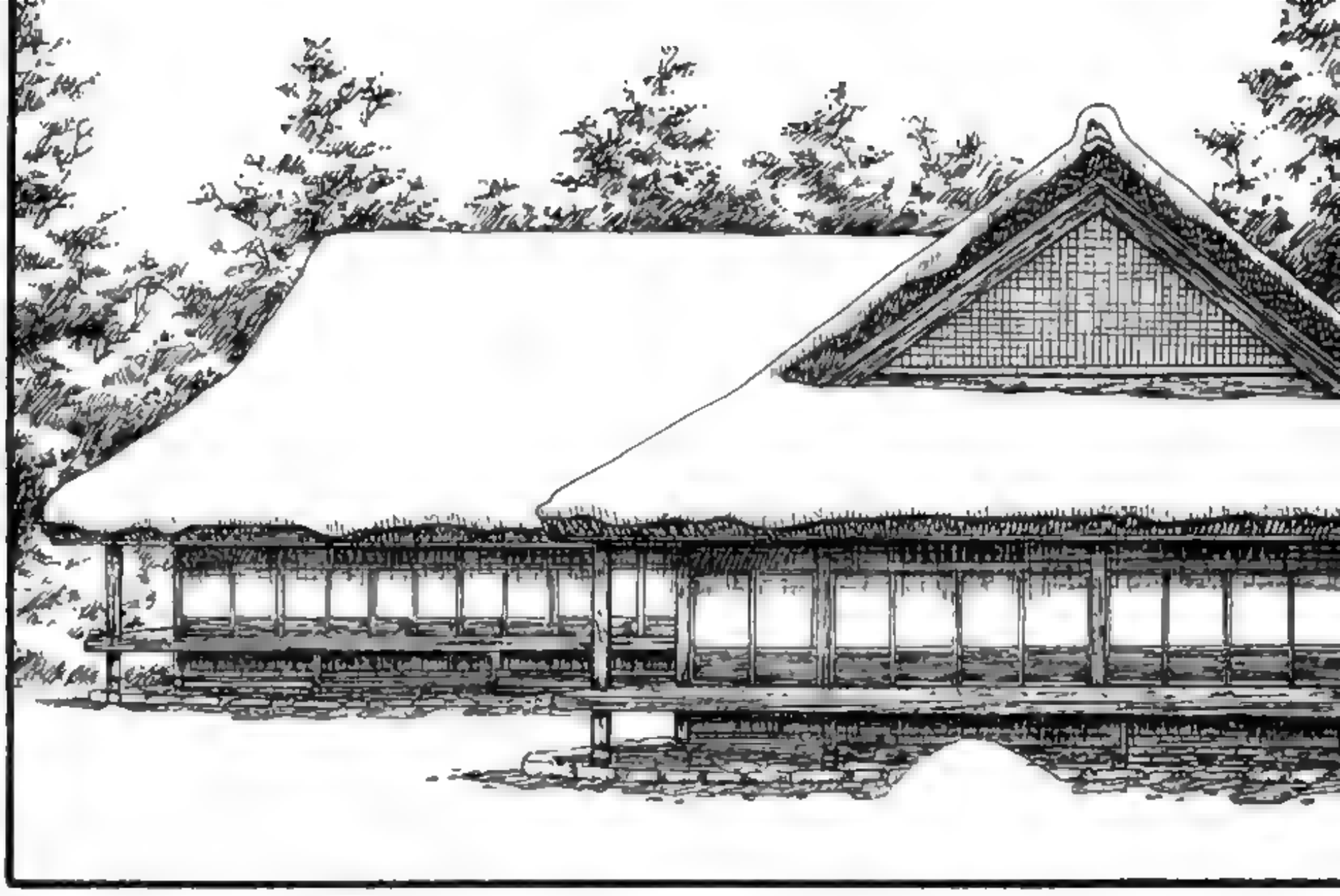
DO YOU UNDER-STAND?

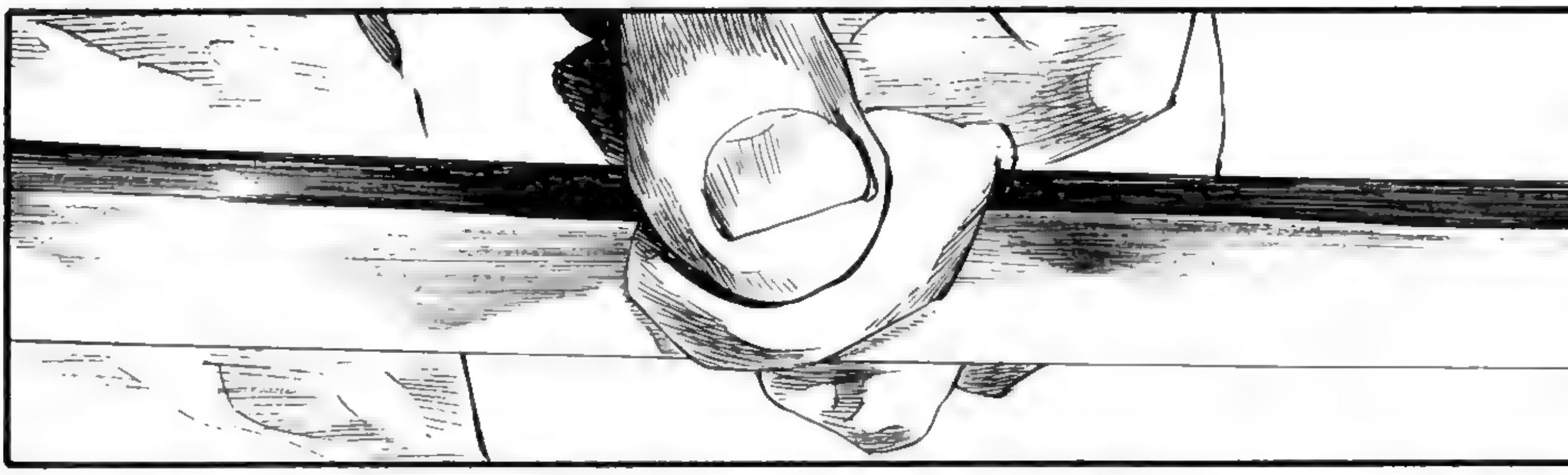
FICH

FICH

OTHERWISE, WE'LL BE THE LAUGHING STOCK OF THE ENTIRE CITY.







THAT'S QUITE A LONG BLADE.

HM?

OH, KŌSHITSU.

MAY I SEE IT?

SURE.

HM... WELL...

BEAUTI-FUL...

FEW COULD WIELD A SWORD LIKE THIS.

WHO OWNS IT?

THERE'S A SWORD SHARPENING REQUEST FROM EDO.

STRAIGHT FROM TOKU-GAWA. IT WOULD SERVE YOU WELL TO RECEIVE HIS PATRONAGE.

THE HON'AMI FAMILY WILL BE SECURE.

"HAVE HON'AMI KŌETSU SHARPEN IT."

A DIRECT ORDER FROM THE TOKUGAWA IEYASU.

HE SPECIFICALLY REQUESTED THAT YOU DO IT...

TOKUGAWA IEYASU, EH...?

RUB RUB

I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND.

TP TP

KŌSHITSU, *YOU* ARE THE TENTH GENERATION HEAD THE HON'AMI FAMILY.

YOUR SHARPENING TECHNIQUE IS MORE THAN ADEQUATE.

I HAVE RETIRED.

HE RAN AWAY.

THANKS TO THIS SNOW...

...THIS NEW YEAR IS BEAUTIFUL AND SERENE.

KŌETSU.

KŌETSU.

YES, MOTHER.

HOW ODD TO SEE YOU SO AGITATED, MOTHER.

WHAT'S WRONG ?

NO...

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? HAVEN'T YOU GONE OUT TODAY?

THE HEAD OF THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL HAS PASSED AWAY.

FICH

FICH

FICH

YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ...

SO IT WAS TRUE.

...

WHICH MEANS THAT YOUNG MAN IS MIYAMOTO MUSASHI.

I HAVEN'T SEEN YOUR GUEST. HOW IS HE?
VERY QUIET.

HE'S SLEPT THROUGH THREE DAYS AND NIGHTS.

ZZZ

ZZZ

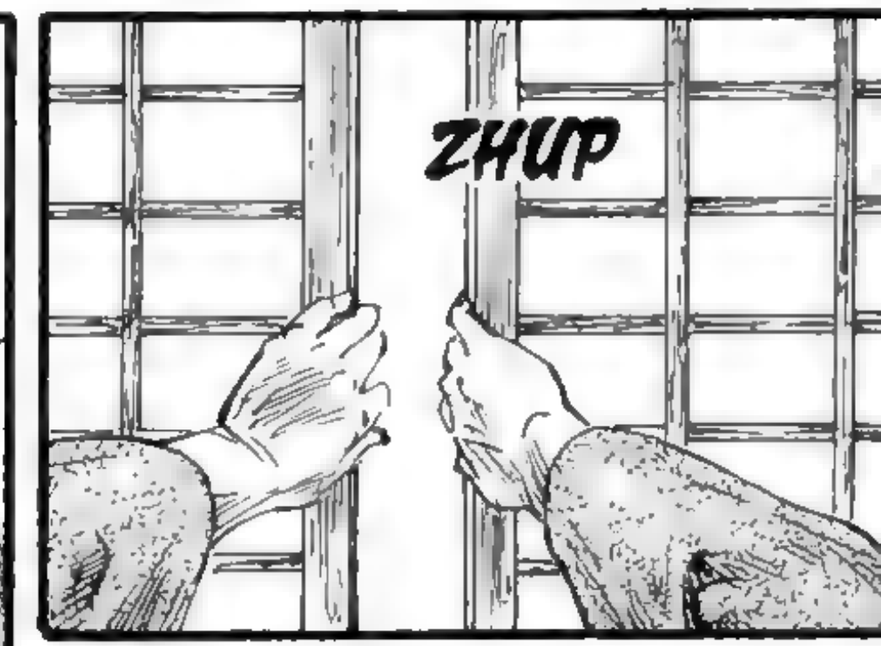
AND WE'LL PRETEND WE DON'T KNOW A THING.

INDEED.

OKAY...

DO YOU KNOW THIS CHARACTER ?

(SNOW)



FWIP

OH MY!

AND THAT WAS VERY COLD.

PRANKS CAN GO TOO FAR.

YOU RASCAL!

SWSH

たくさん
たくさん
たくさん

I SEE.

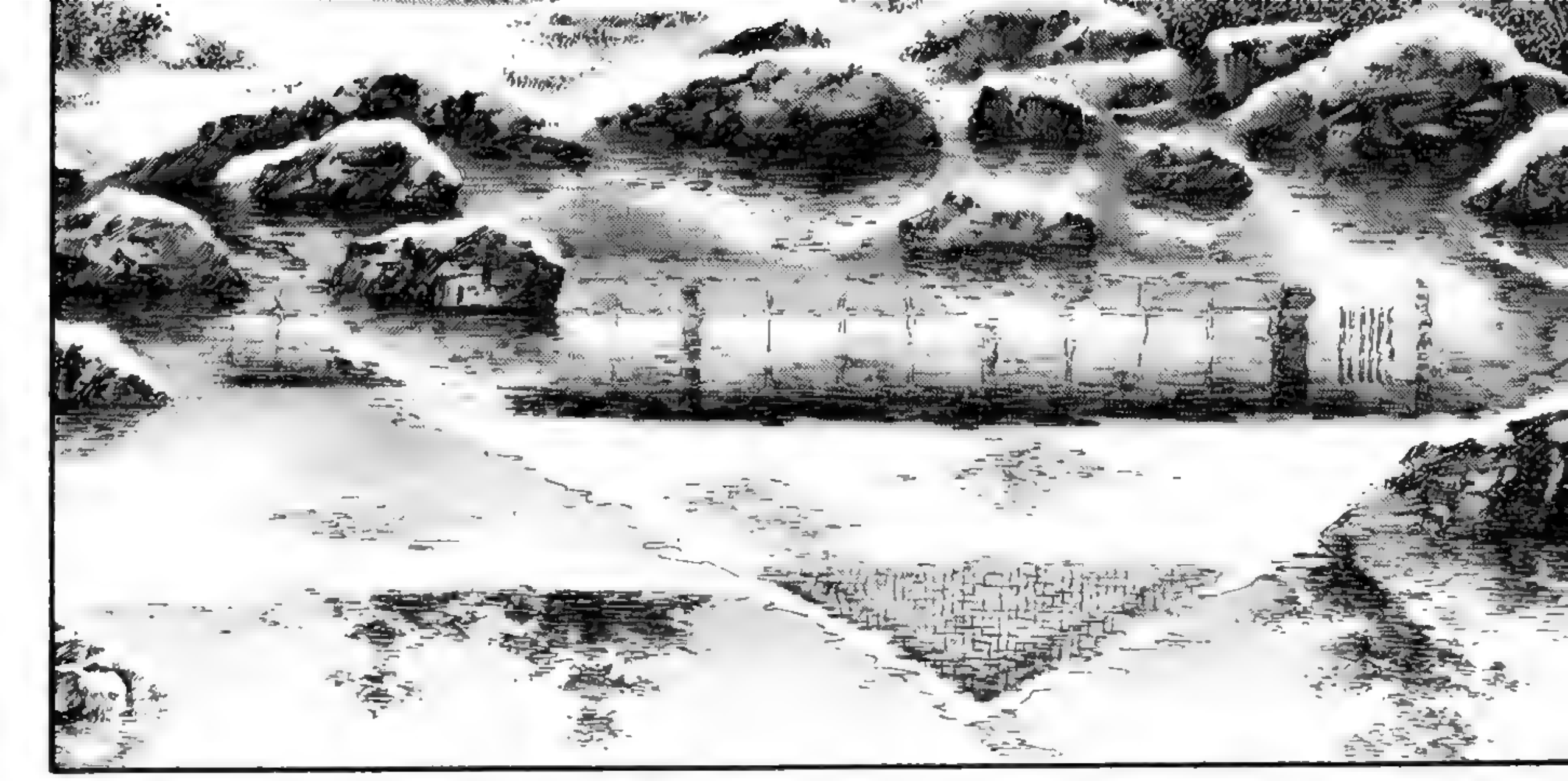
(VERY VERY VERY MUCH.)

AAUH.

Vagabond

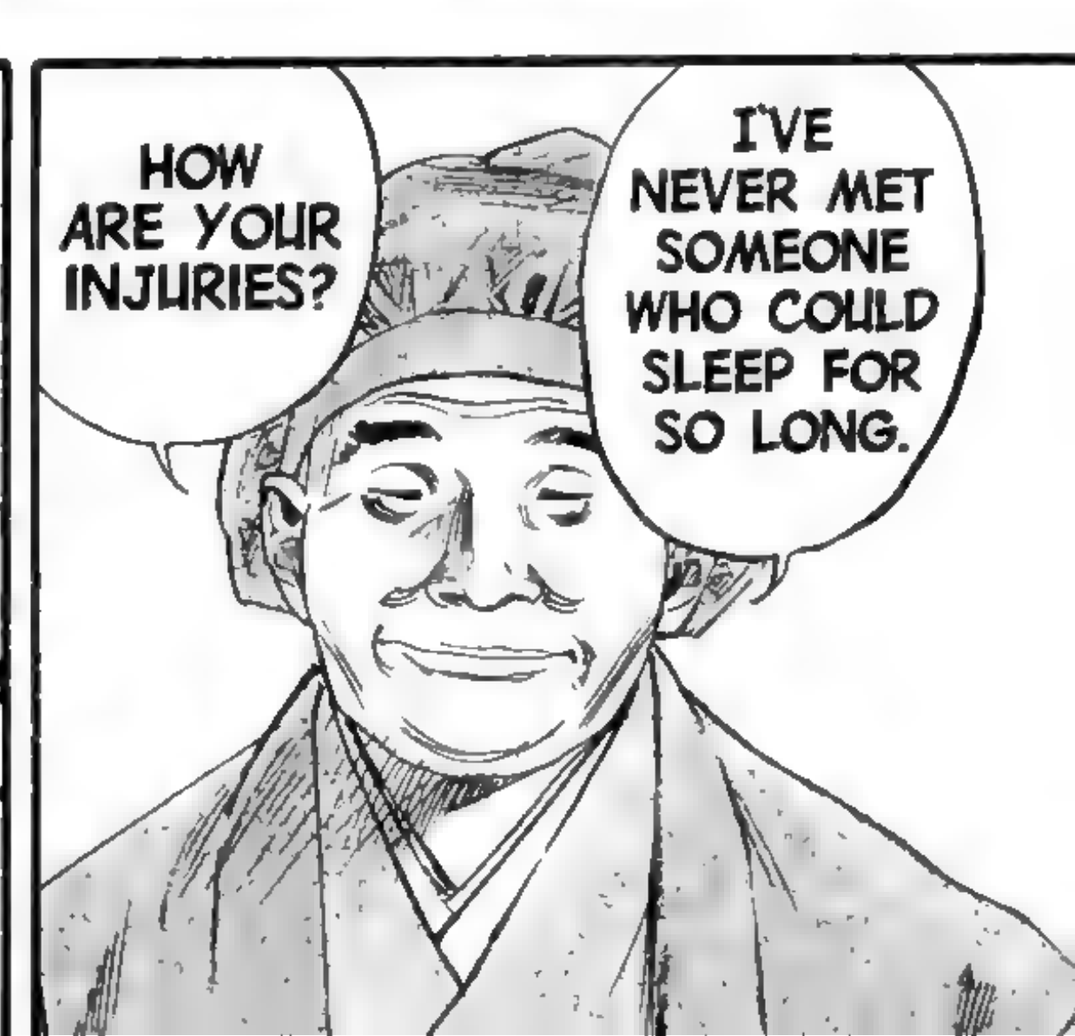
(Auh!)
(Hometown)

#193 | Bedlam in Kyoto



GLANCE

FP
I THANK YOU FOR THAT.
YOU NOT ONLY PUT ME UP, BUT YOU ALSO TREATED MY WOUNDS ...
I'D LIKE TO REPAY YOU, BUT I'M ONLY AN ERRANT SAMURAI WITH HARDLY ANY POSSESIONS.


HOW ARE YOUR INJURIES?
I'VE NEVER MET SOMEONE WHO COULD SLEEP FOR SO LONG.

YOU'D PROBABLY BE BETTER OFF STAYING HERE A WHILE.

I HADN'T PLANNED ON STAYING HERE SO LONG...

SORRY.

.....

...

GLANCE

HMMM

...?

THERE ARE MANY RUFFIANS OUT THERE WHO'D LIKE TO MEET YOU.

YOU ARE THE TALK OF THE TOWN.

IT SEEMS YOU HAVE QUITE A SCORE TO SETTLE WITH THE YOSHI-OKA.

ISN'T THAT SO, MIYAMOTO MUSASHI?

YAHH!!

COME ON!

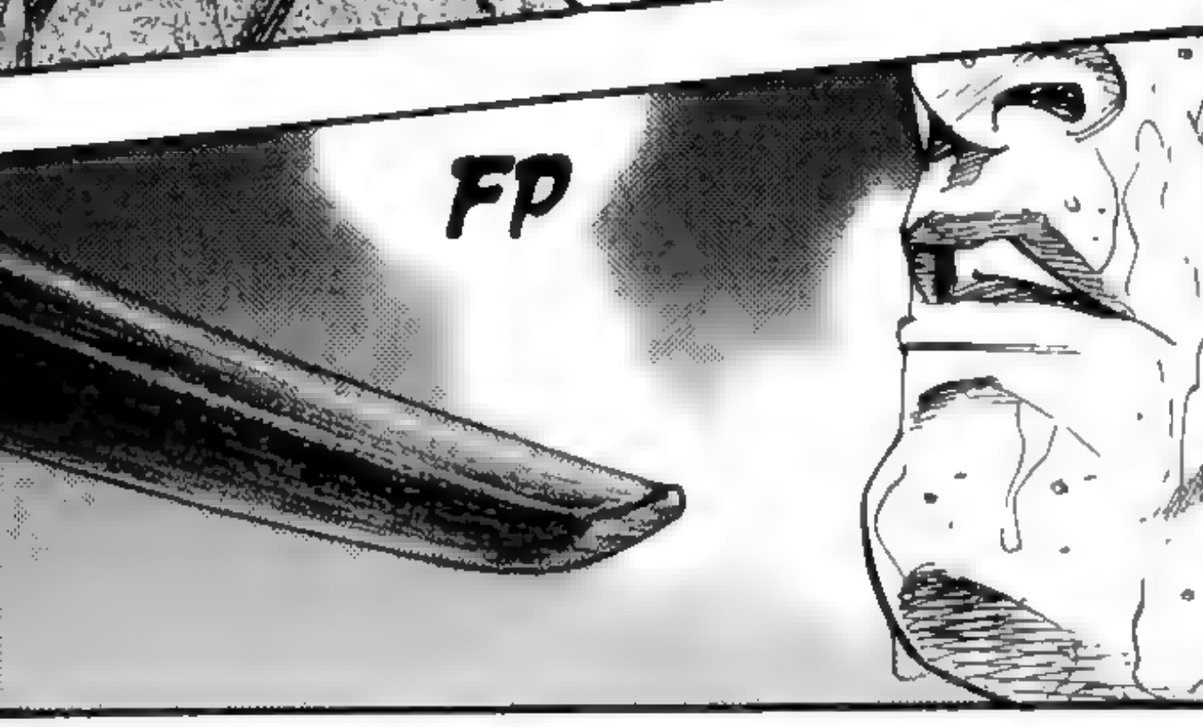
THWÄK

KLAK

YAHH!

TIKKIPAK

YAH!

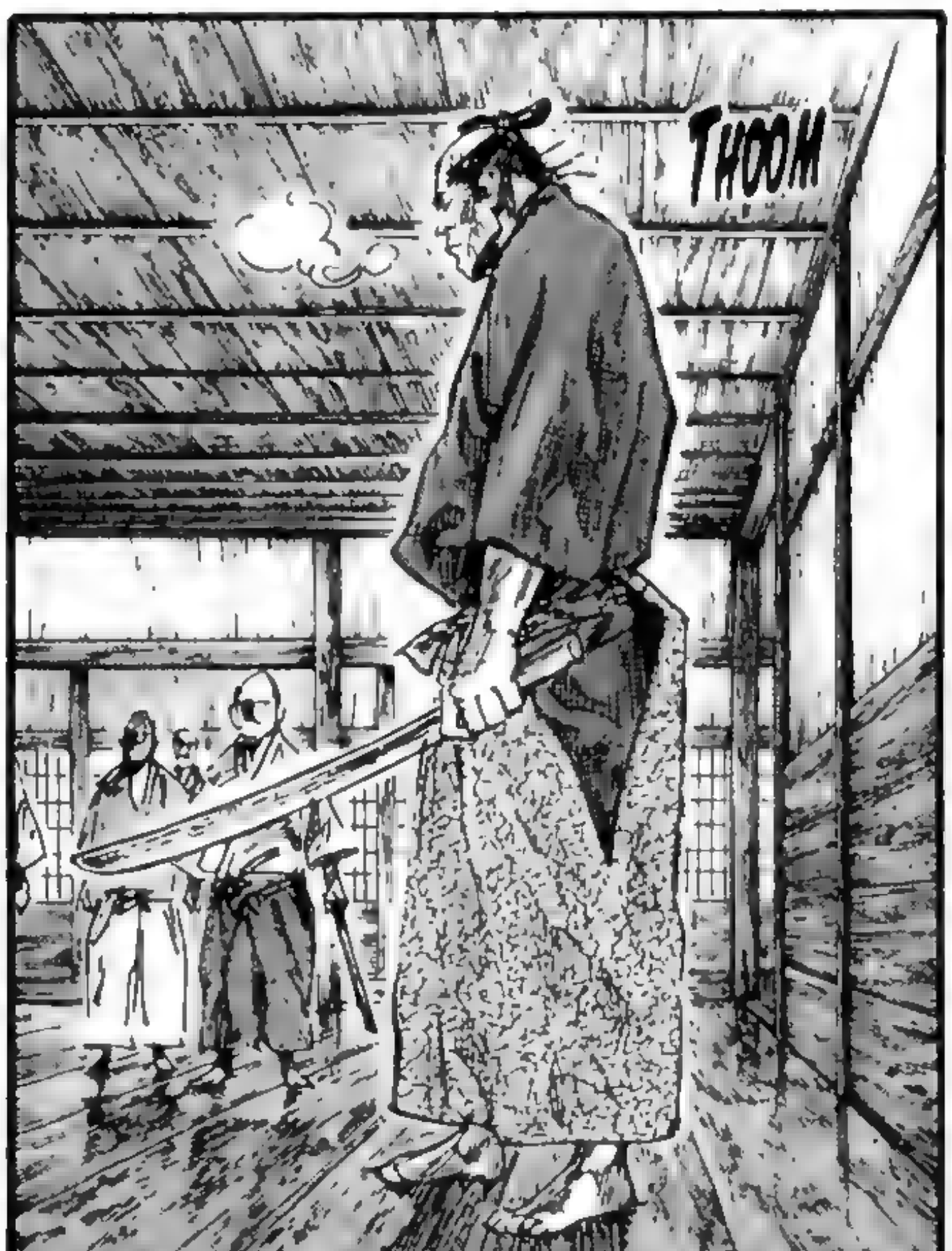


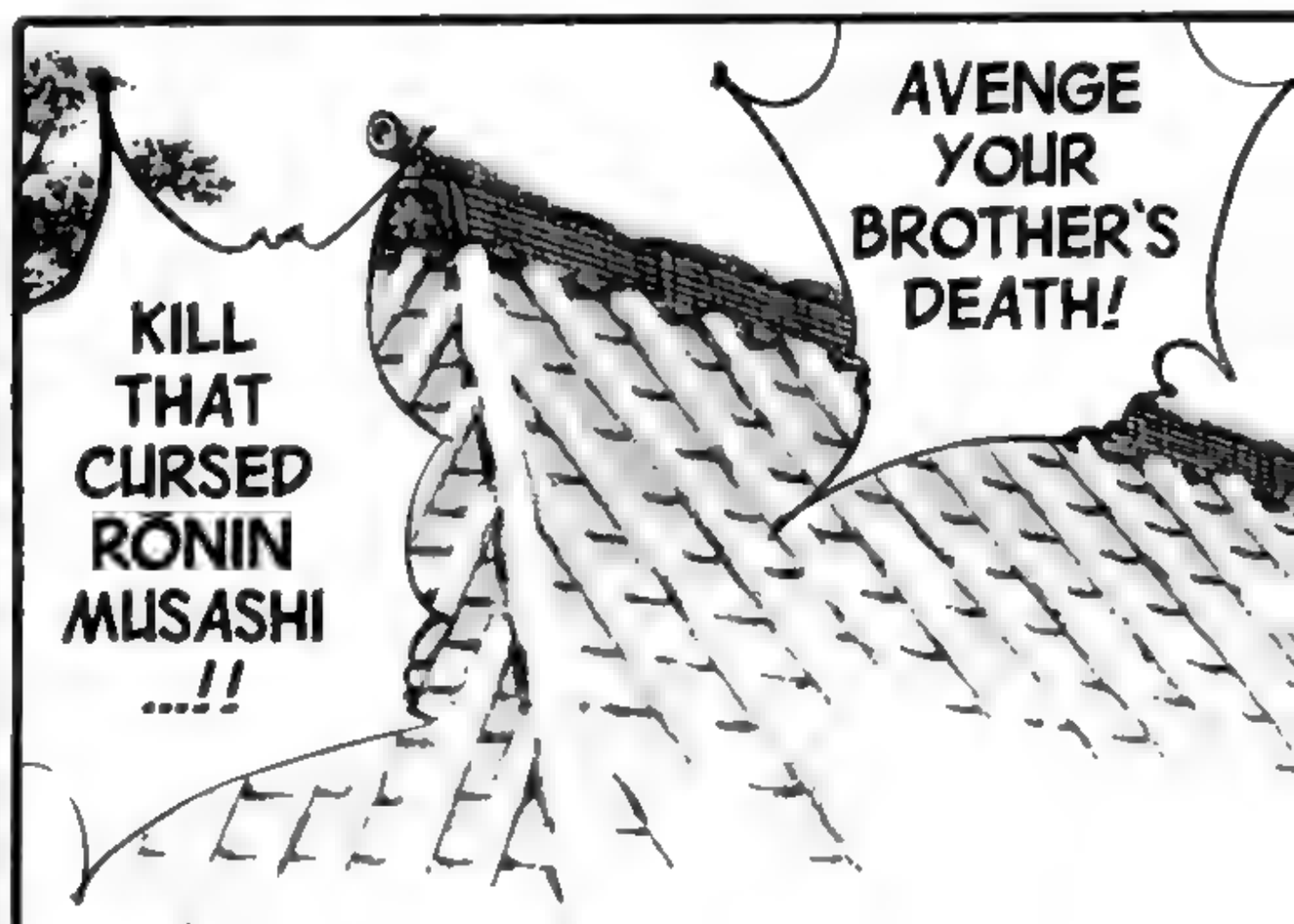
DEN-SHICHIRŌ SENSEI!!

NO, THAT WON'T DO!!

THERE'S ONLY FIVE MORE DAYS.

MOURN FOR SEIJŪRŌ SENSEI AFTER YOUR FIGHT IS OVER!!





THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I INTEND TO DO.

YES...

FSH

NOW THEN...

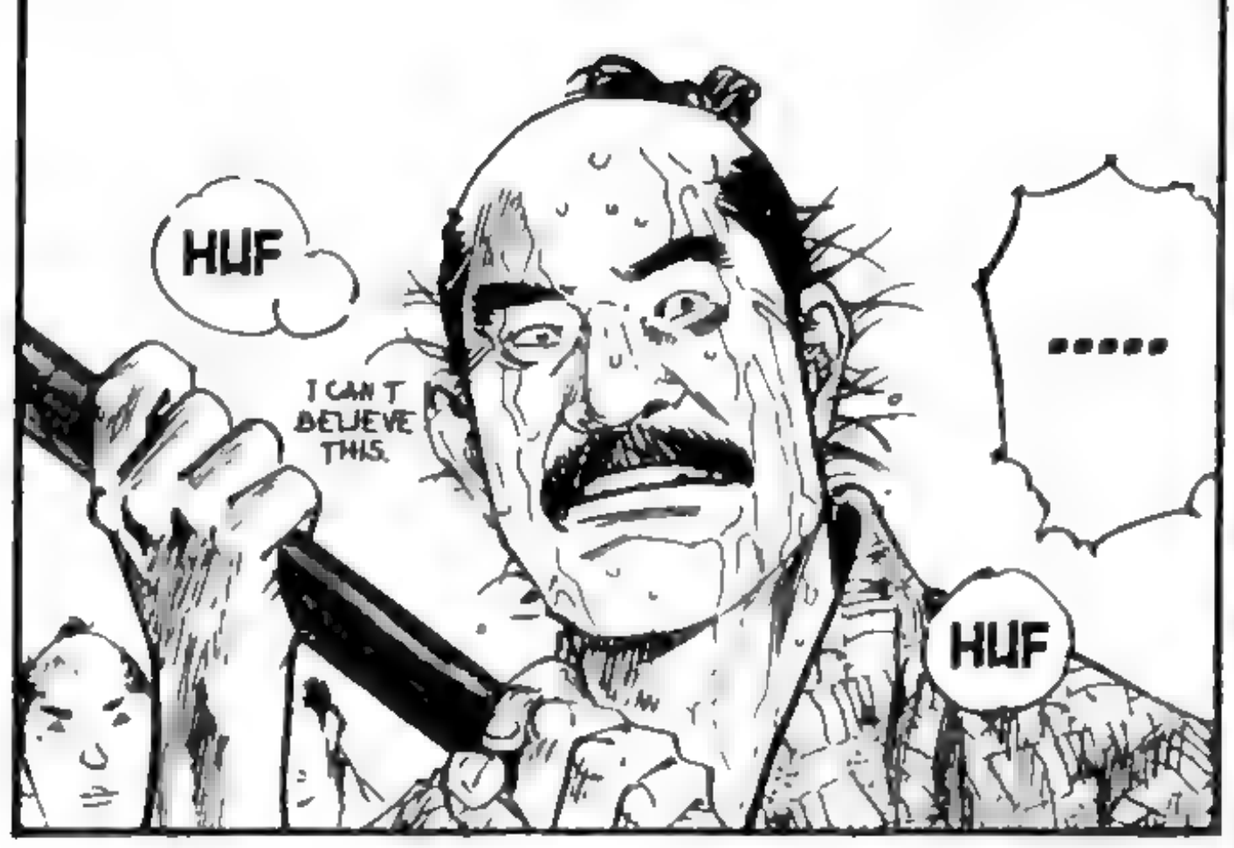
ZWIP

THWAK

THWAK

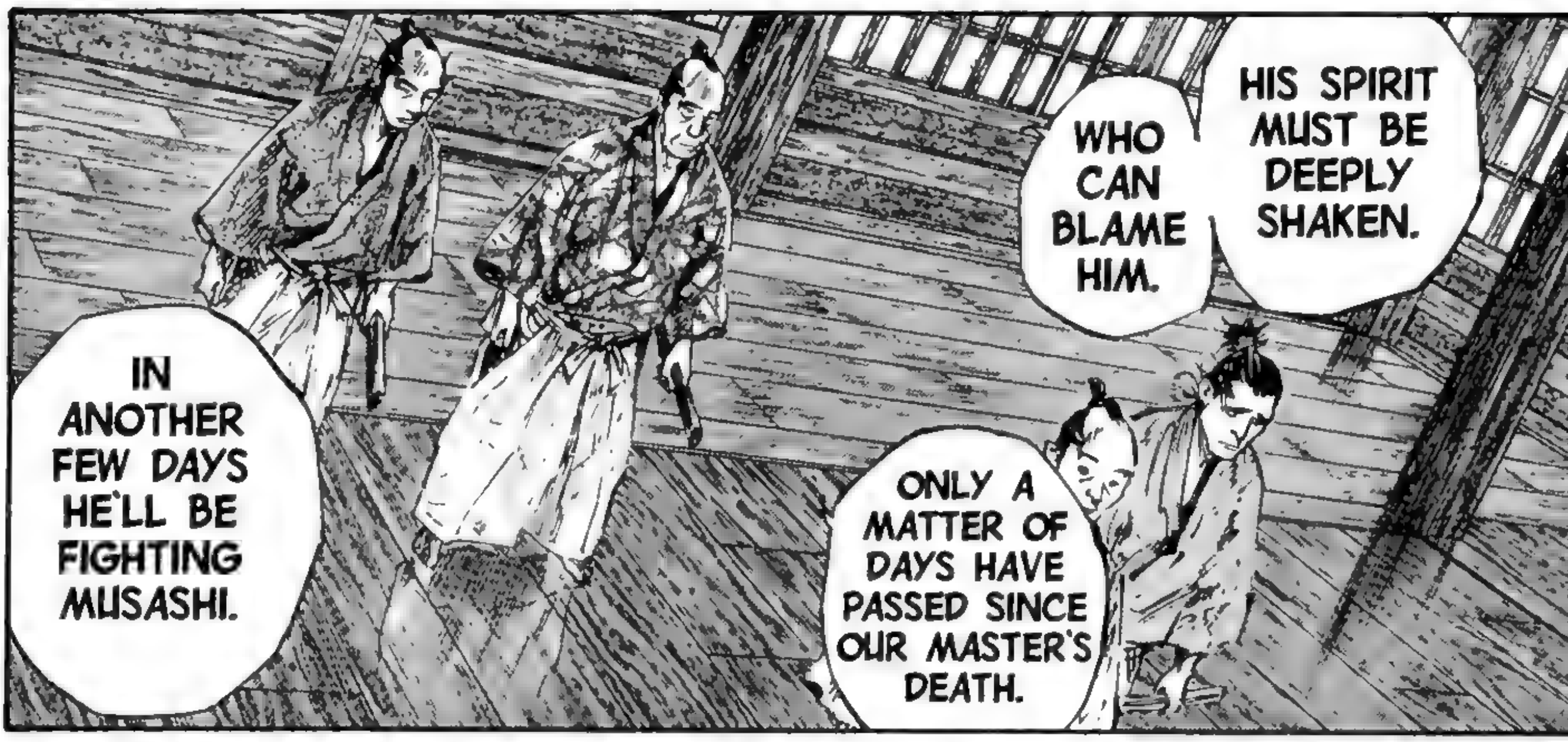
THWAK

!!


HUF
I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS.
.....
HUF

HUF
HUF
HUF

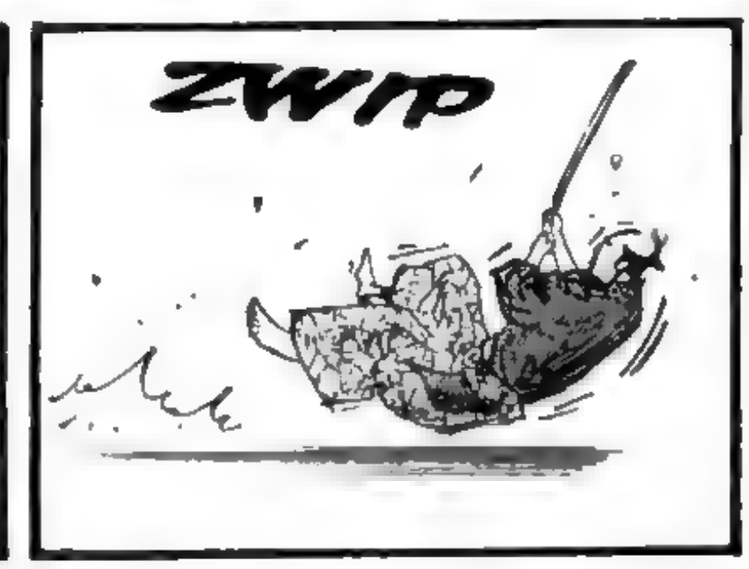
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
I'M IMPRESSED, HORIKAWA.


IN ANOTHER FEW DAYS HE'LL BE FIGHTING MUSASHI.
WHO CAN BLAME HIM.
HIS SPIRIT MUST BE DEEPLY SHAKEN.
ONLY A MATTER OF DAYS HAVE PASSED SINCE OUR MASTER'S DEATH.

UEDA ...
WE MUST--

I DOUBT HE CAN ENDURE THIS SITUATION.

HUF
HUF
WHAT'S ALL THAT WHISPERING ABOUT?!



WELCOME HOME.

I SEE.

WHERE'S YAE?
SLEEP-ING.

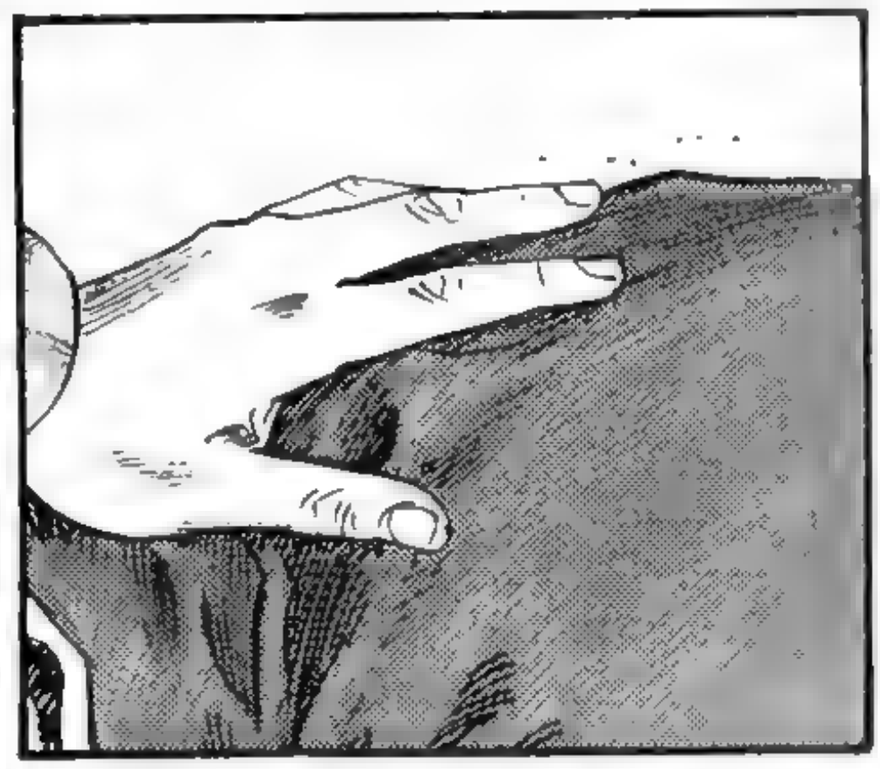
SOUND ASLEEP ...

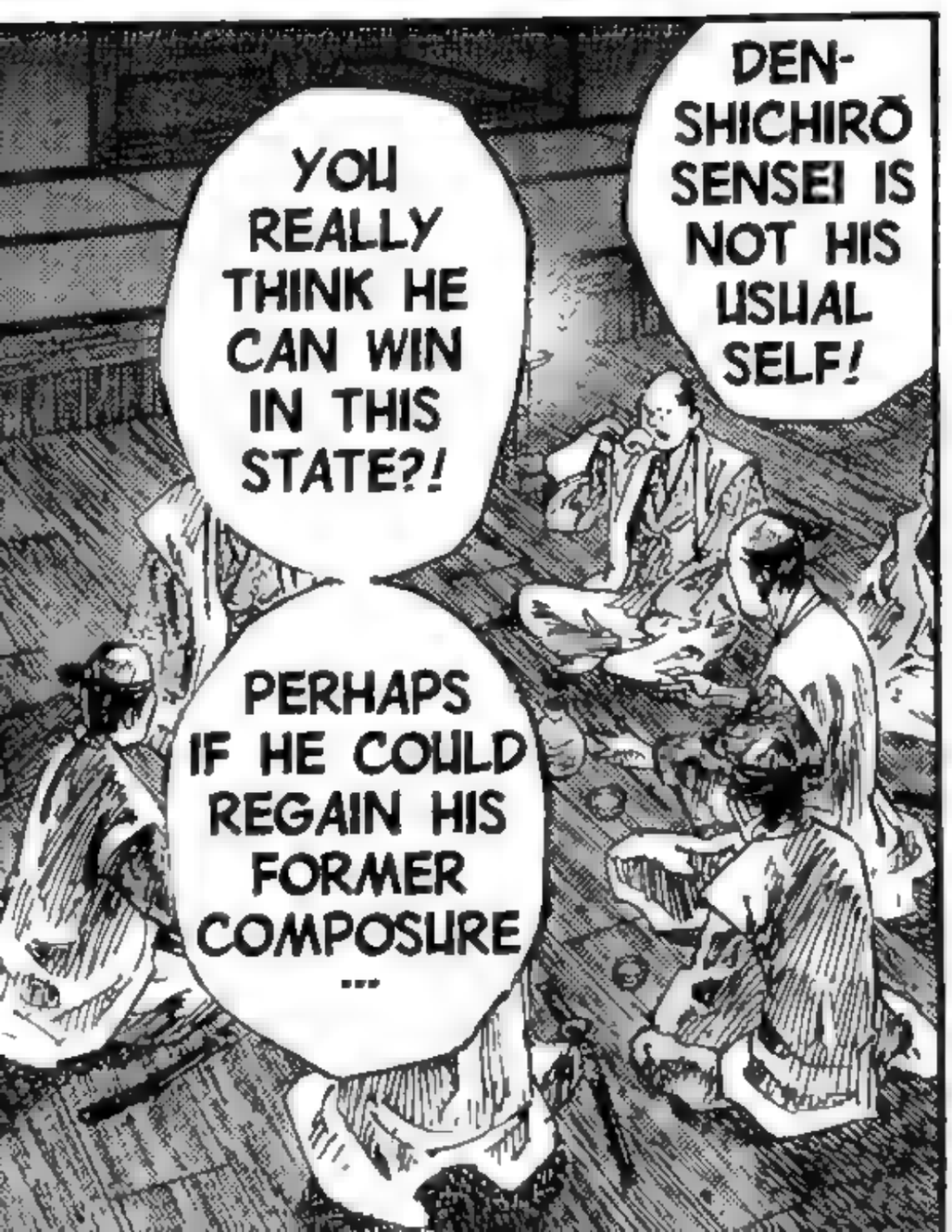
FP

BRR
BRR
BRR

ALL EYES ARE ON US.
THAT'S EXACTLY WHY WE MUST ACT!

WE MUSTN'T RUSH INTO THIS.

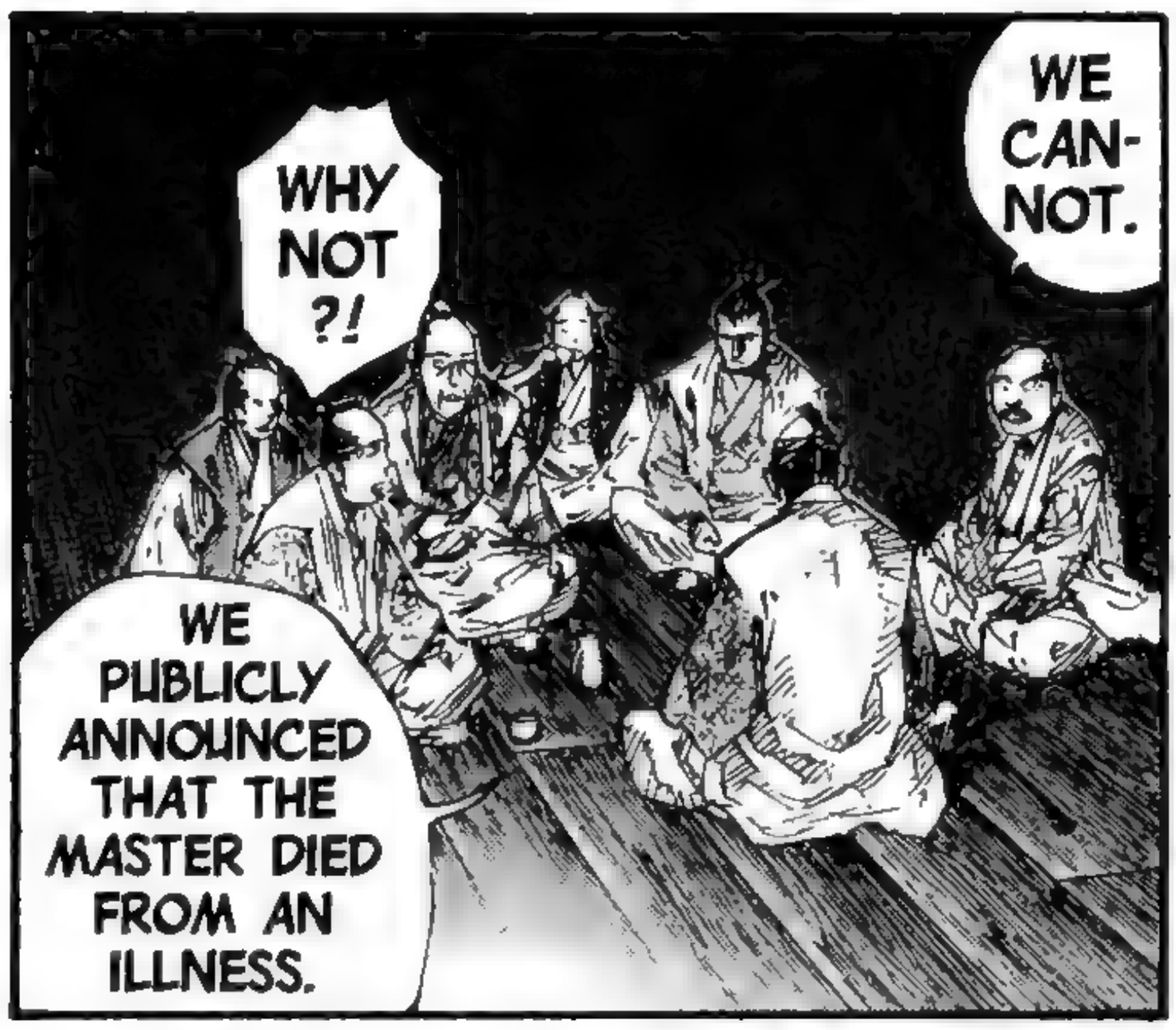



YOU REALLY THINK HE CAN WIN IN THIS STATE?!
DEN-SHICHIRŌ SENSEI IS NOT HIS USUAL SELF!
PERHAPS IF HE COULD REGAIN HIS FORMER COMPOSURE ...

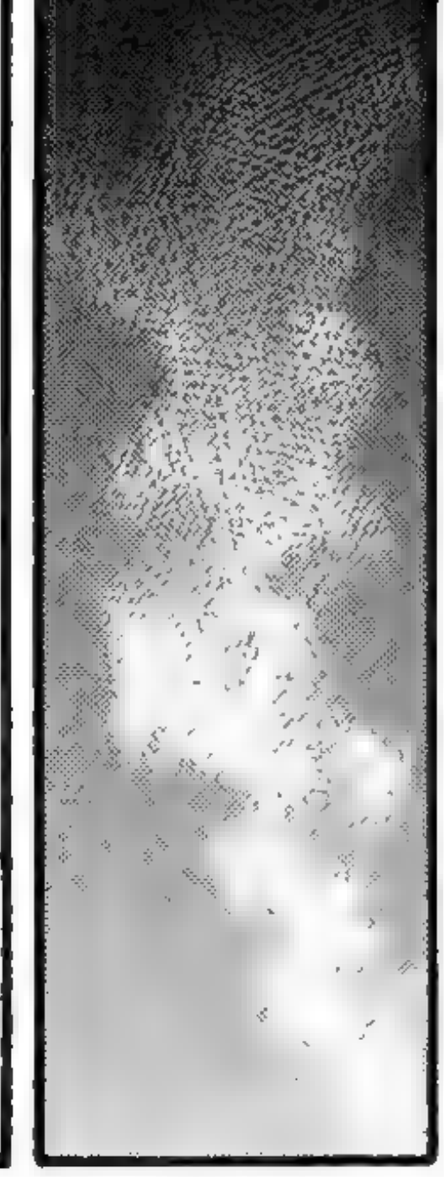
WE MUST CONSIDER THE PROSPECT OF MUSASHI DEFEATING *BOTH* BROTHERS...

IF THAT HAPPENS, OUR SCHOOL WILL BE FINISHED!!

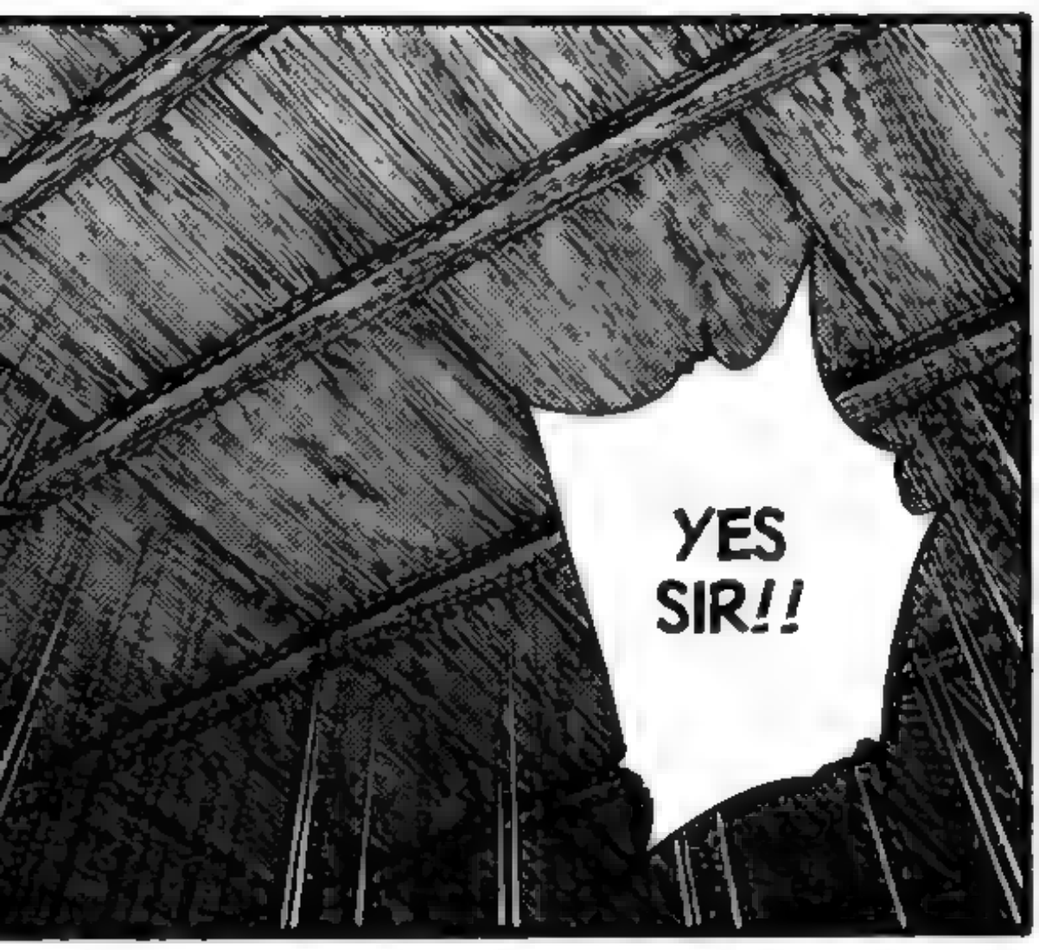
WHAT ARE YOU SUGGESTING WE SHOULD DO?



IN ANY CASE...



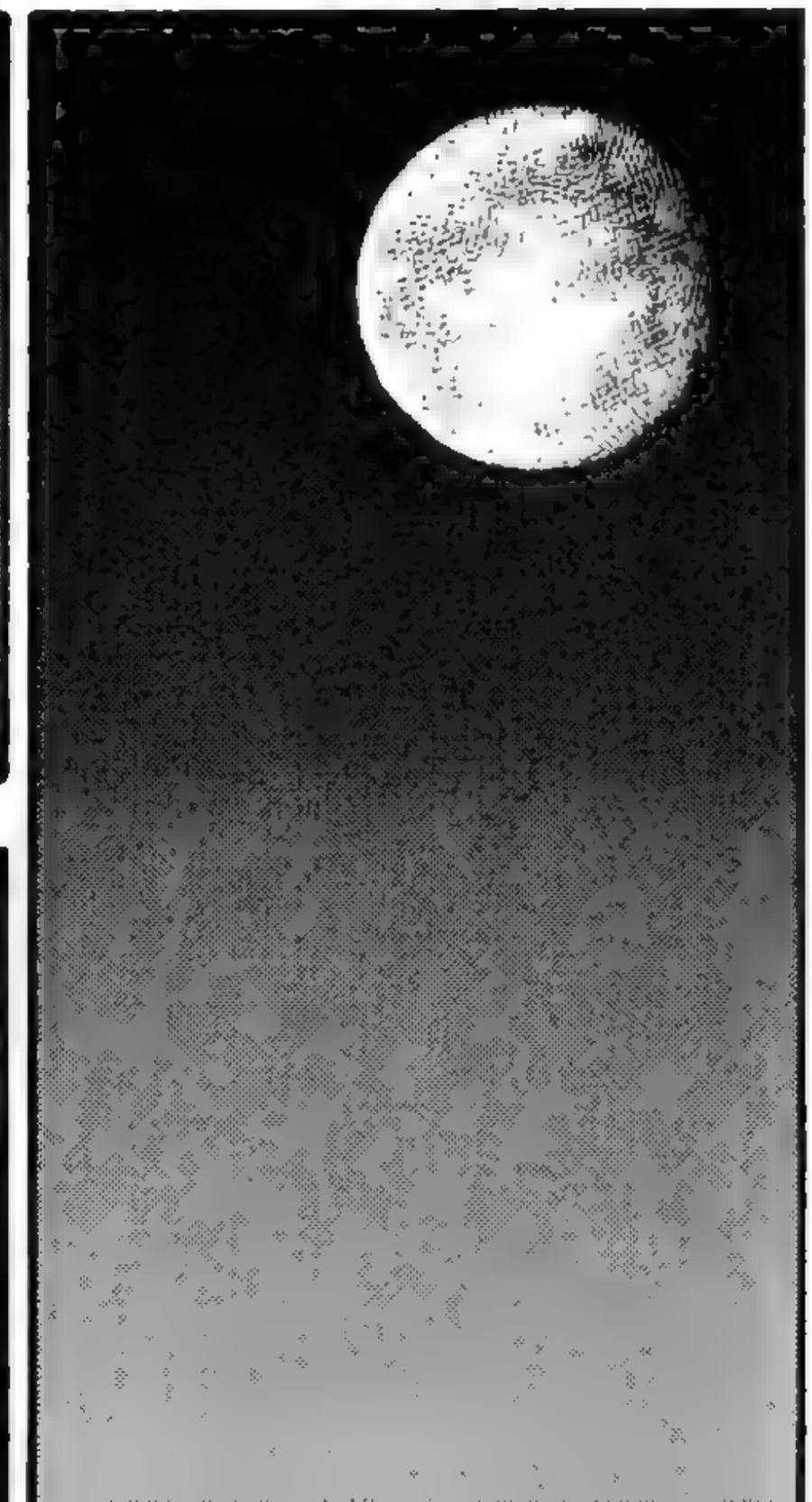
THEN WHAT SHALL WE DO?
ARE YOU SAYING WE SHOULD LET THE DUEL TAKE PLACE?!

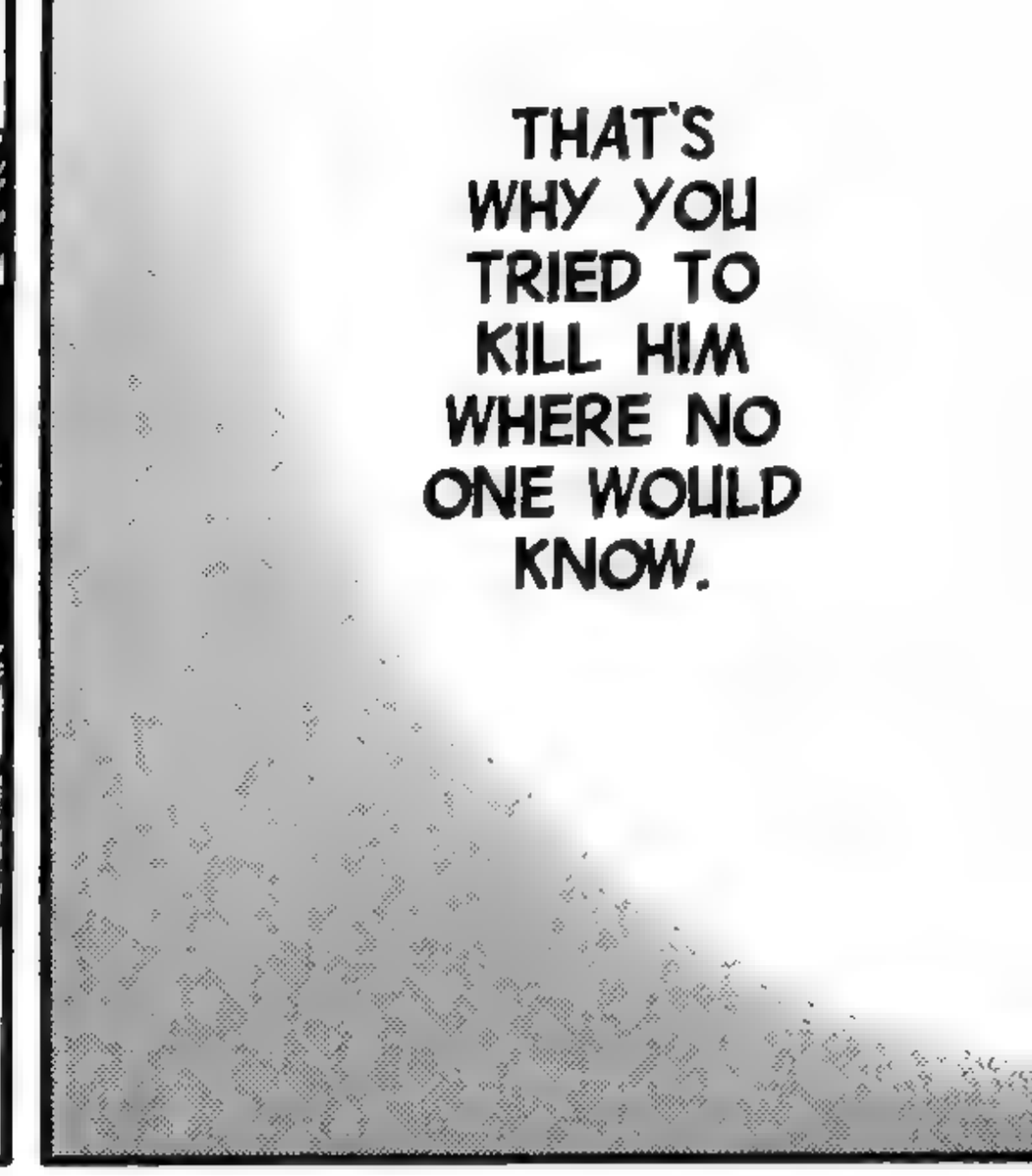

YES SIR!!

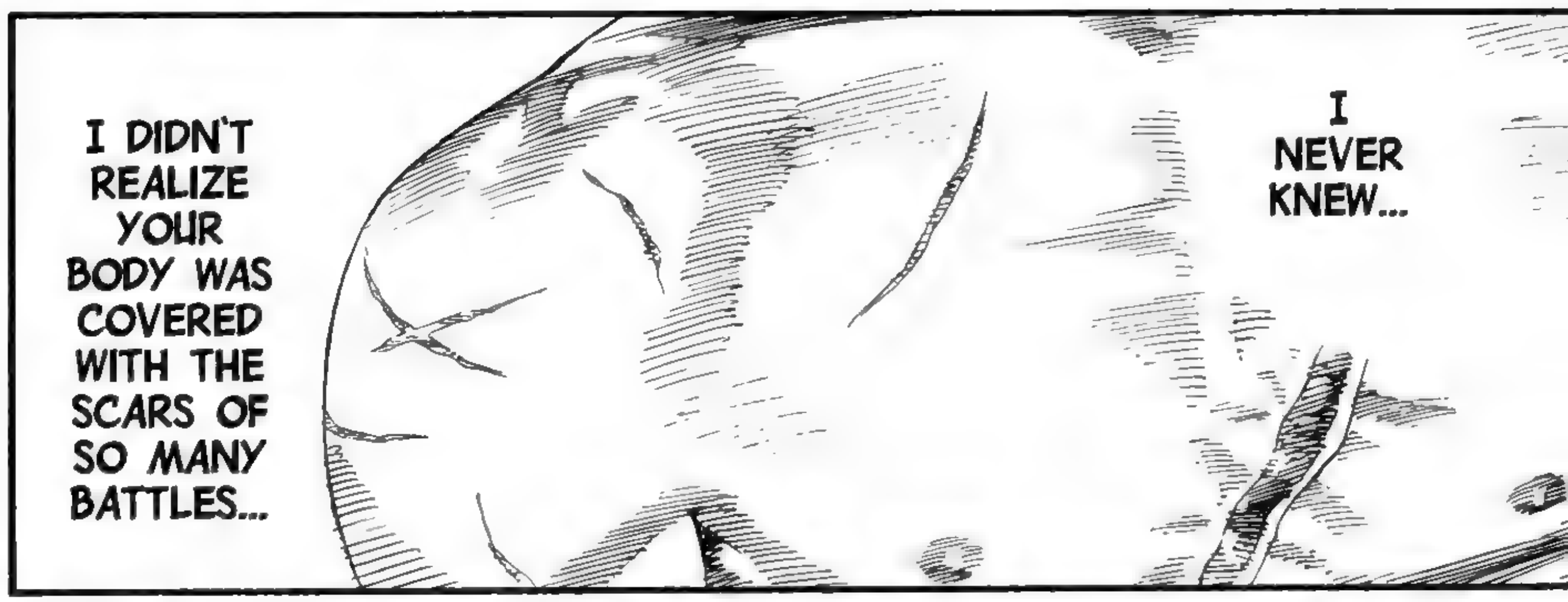
SEARCH ALL THE INNS IN KYOTO.
IT WOULDN'T HURT TO KNOW MUSASHI'S WHERE-ABOUTS.

SEIJŪRŌ...
YOU THOUGHT DENSHICHIRŌ COULDN'T BEAT MUSASHI...

I SEE...




THAT'S WHY YOU TRIED TO KILL HIM WHERE NO ONE WOULD KNOW.

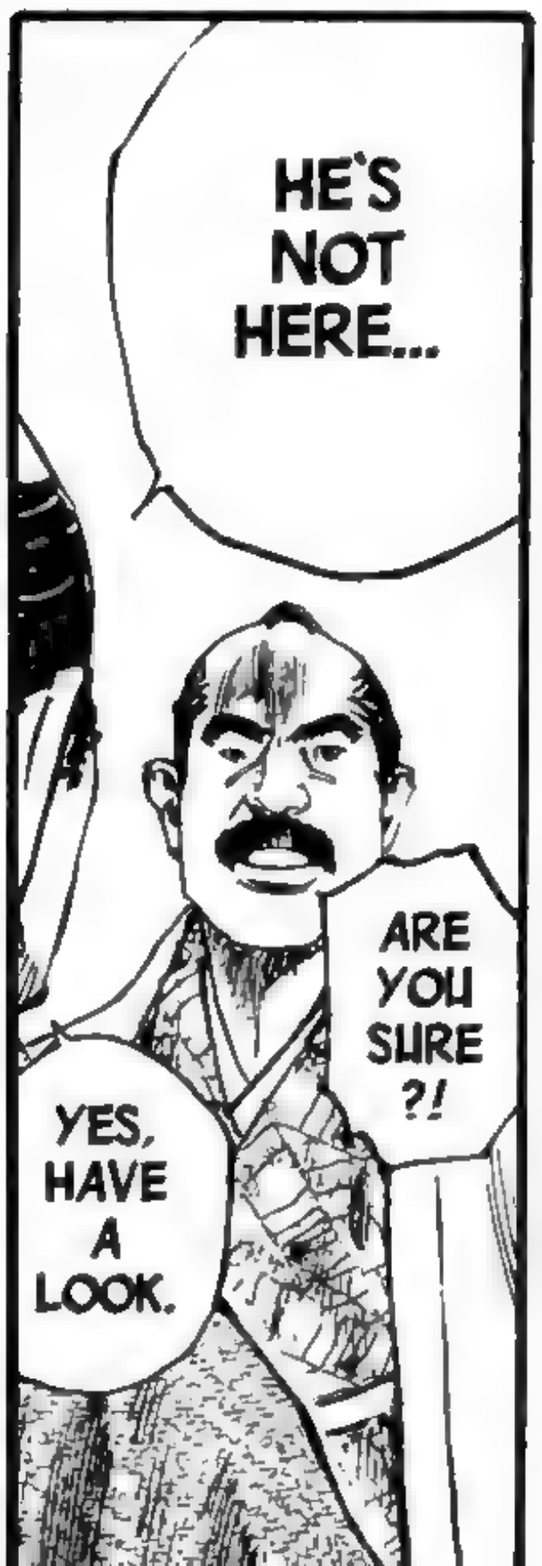

I DIDN'T REALIZE YOUR BODY WAS COVERED WITH THE SCARS OF SO MANY BATTLES...
I NEVER KNEW...

THIS WASN'T THE FIRST TIME...

YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING AFTER YOUR BROTHER FOR QUITE A WHILE.

EXCUSE US.

?!

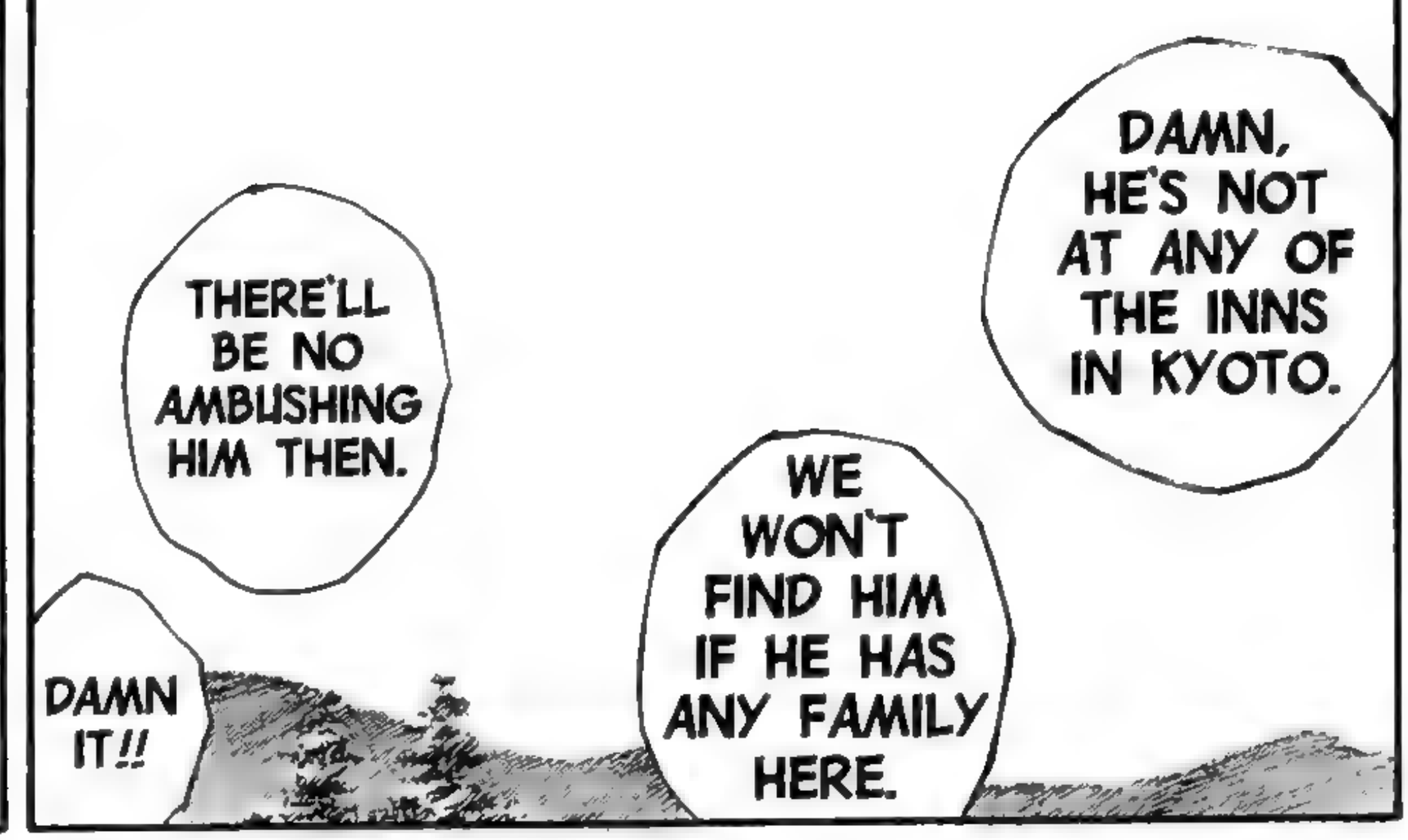

HE'S NOT HERE...
ARE YOU SURE ?!
YES, HAVE A LOOK.

...FOR THE ARSONIST WHO LIT THEIR SCHOOL ON FIRE A YEAR AGO?
N-NO! ARE THEY STILL SEARCHING...

THAT WAS ME!!

WE'RE FROM THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.
WE NEED TO GO OVER YOUR GUEST BOOK.
...!!

AMBUSH ?


THERE'LL BE NO AMBUSHING HIM THEN.
DAMN, HE'S NOT AT ANY OF THE INNS IN KYOTO.
DAMN IT!!
WE WON'T FIND HIM IF HE HAS ANY FAMILY HERE.

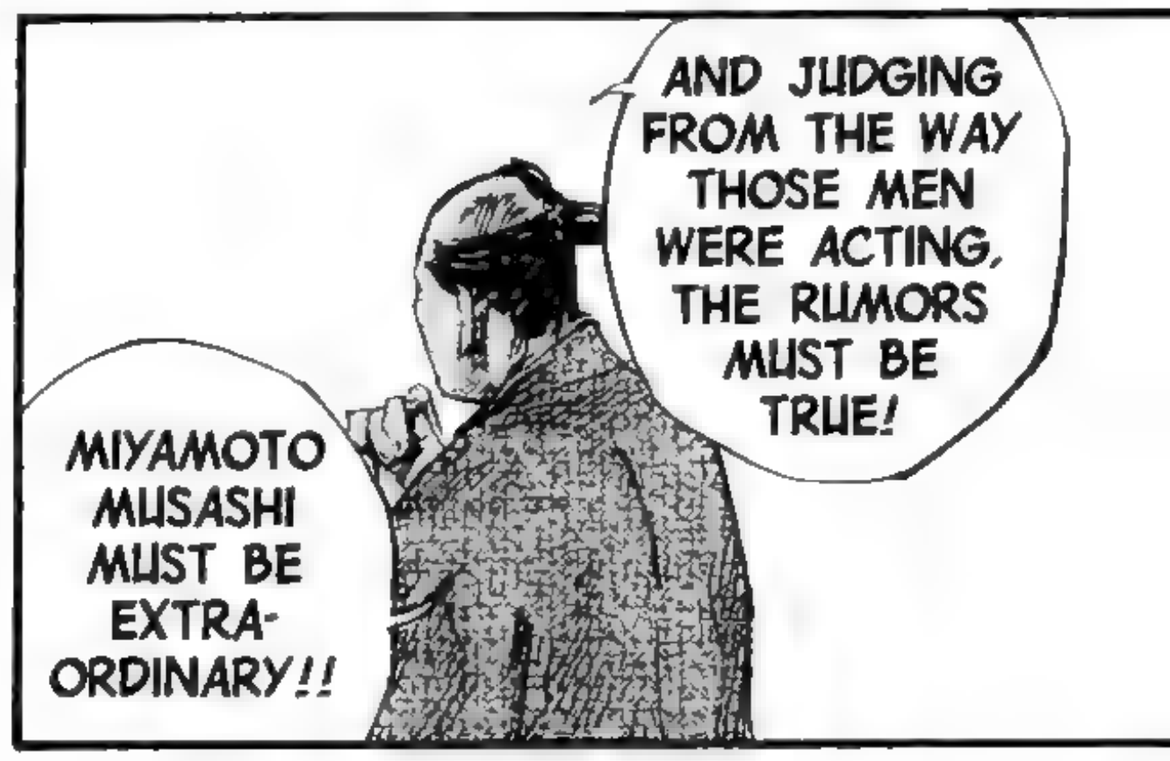
YES, SIR.
REPORT TO US IMMEDIATELY IF YOU SEE HIM
UNDER-STAND ?!

...?

MY NAME IS SASAKI...
WHAT'S WRONG? WHY ARE THOSE YOSHI-OKA GUYS SO RILED UP?
HAVEN'T YOU HEARD?
IT'S THE TALK OF THE TOWN.

MUSASHI CUT DOWN SEIJŪRŌ...?

THE HEAD OF THE YOSHIOKA ?!



Vagabond

(I'm somebody too!)

#194 | Talk of the Town

MY MASTER IS AWESOME!!

WOW, WOW, WOW!!

LOWER YOUR VOICE JŌTARŌ.

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE WE HEARD THIS RUMOR...

...ABOUT *MY* MASTER.

I WANT TO TELL EVERYONE!

HE'S *MY* MASTER!!

YOU BETTER NOT.

UNLESS YOU WANT TO ENDANGER US.

HE ACTUALLY CUT DOWN YOSHIOKA SEIJŪRŌ!

CUT HIM DOWN!

BRR

BRR

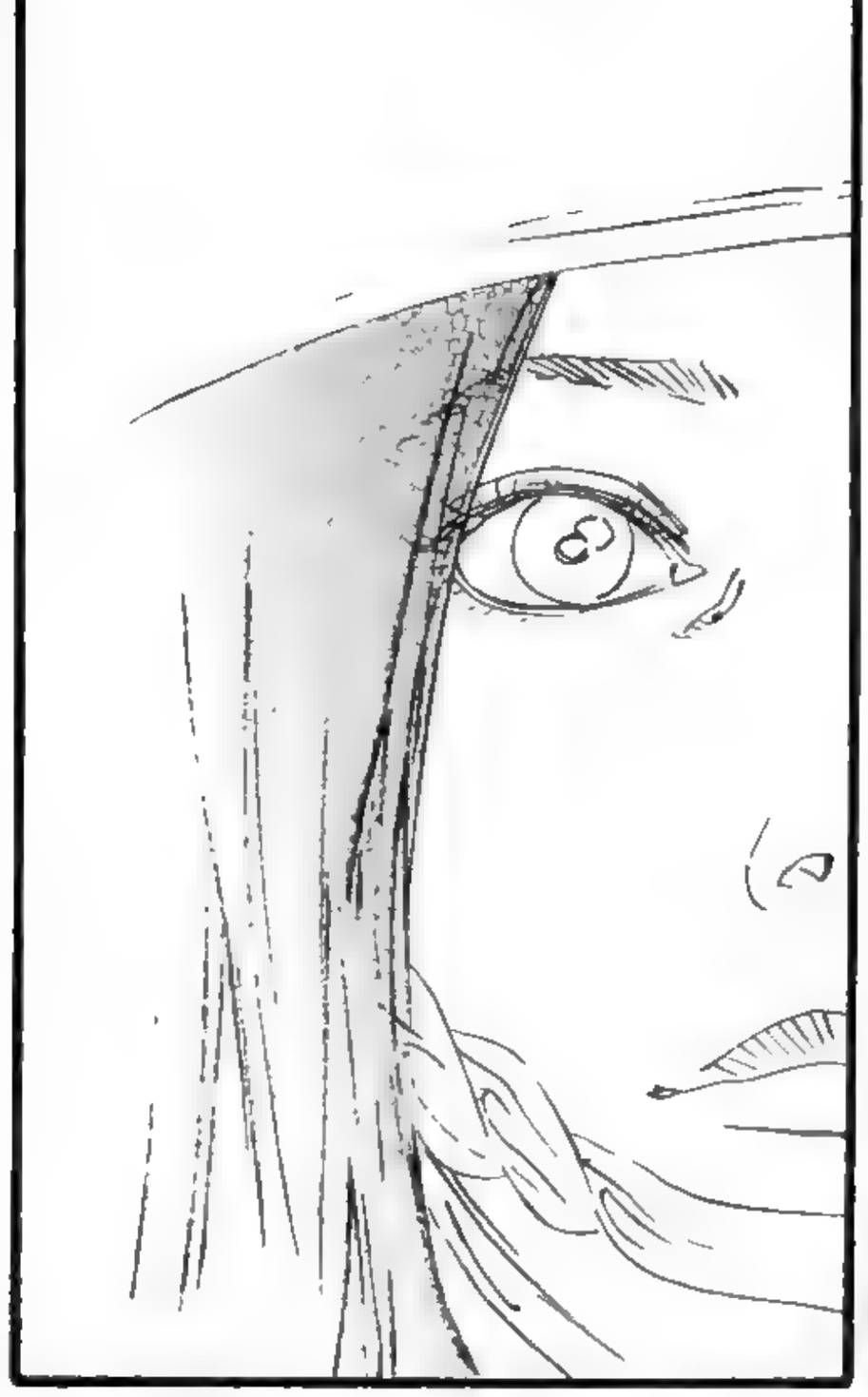
BRR

IT GIVES ME THE SHIVERS.

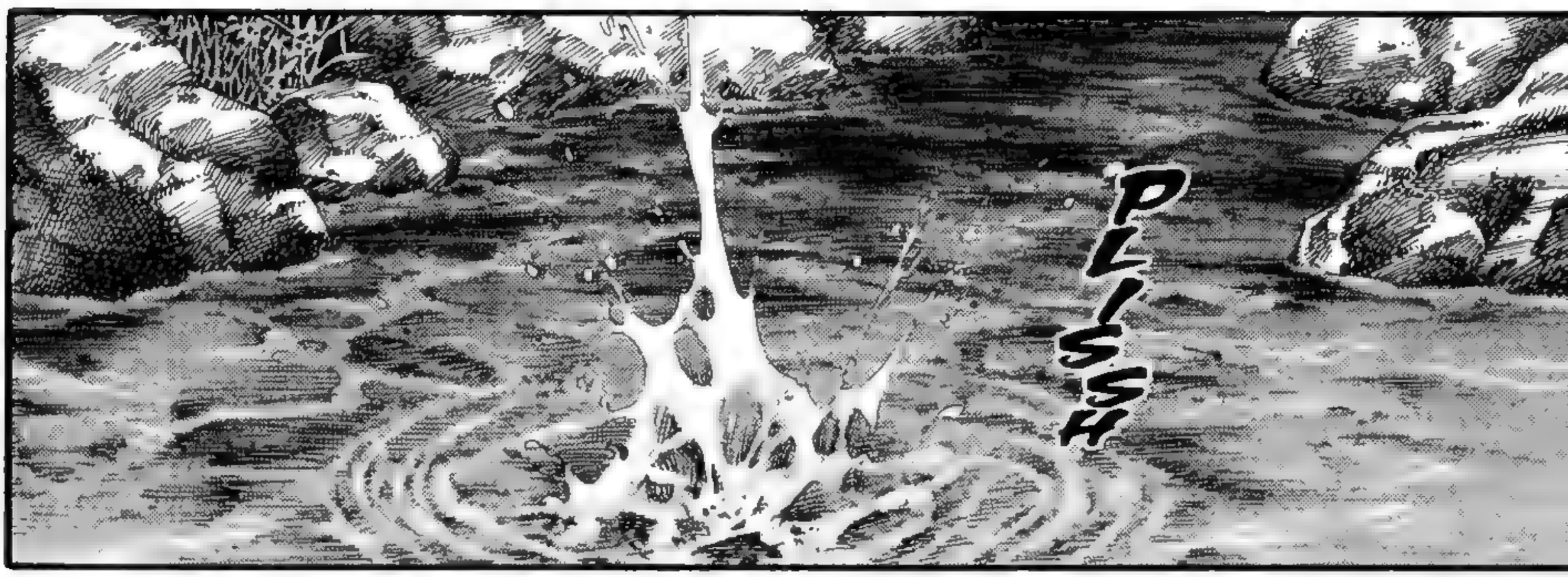
I JUST WANT TO, OKAY?

I KNOW!

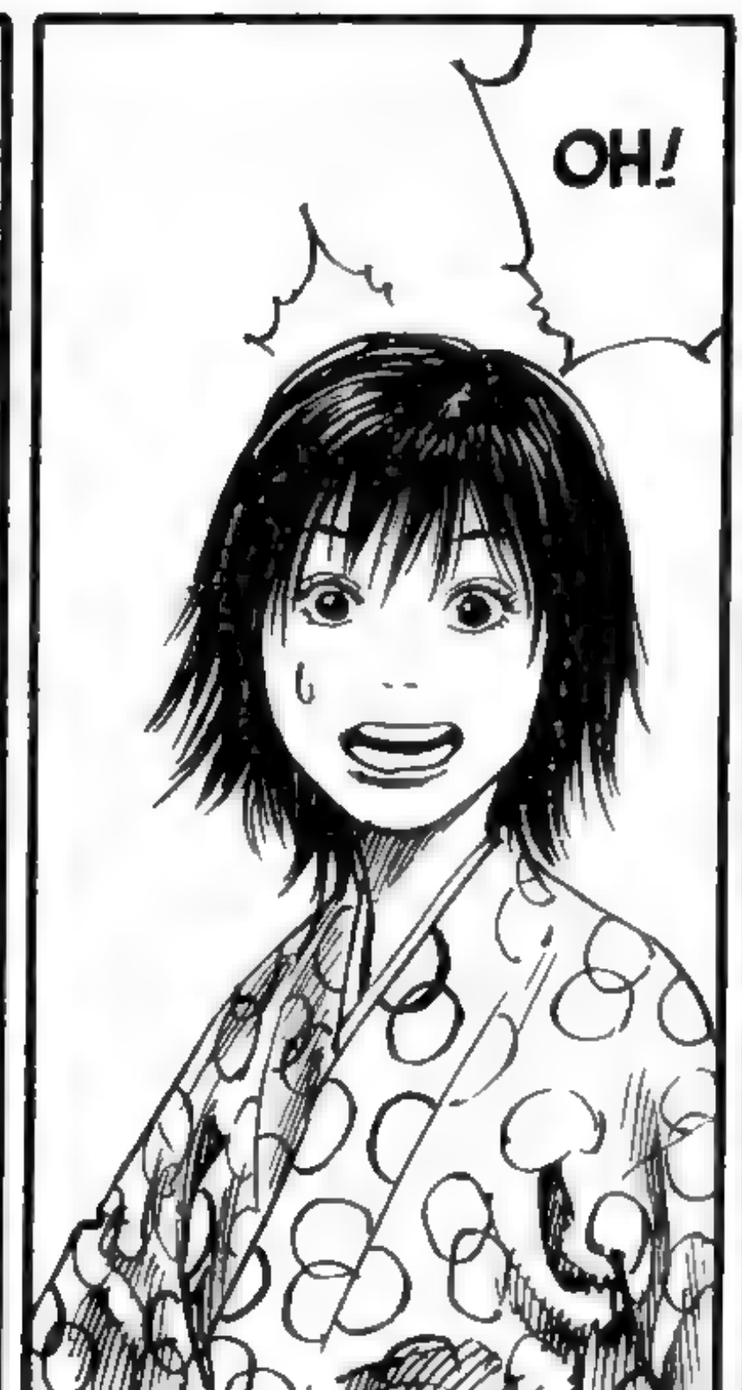
TAKEZŌ ...



BLAH
BLAH
BLAH


PLISSH

...
FWP
FWP
TAKEZŌ
!


OH!

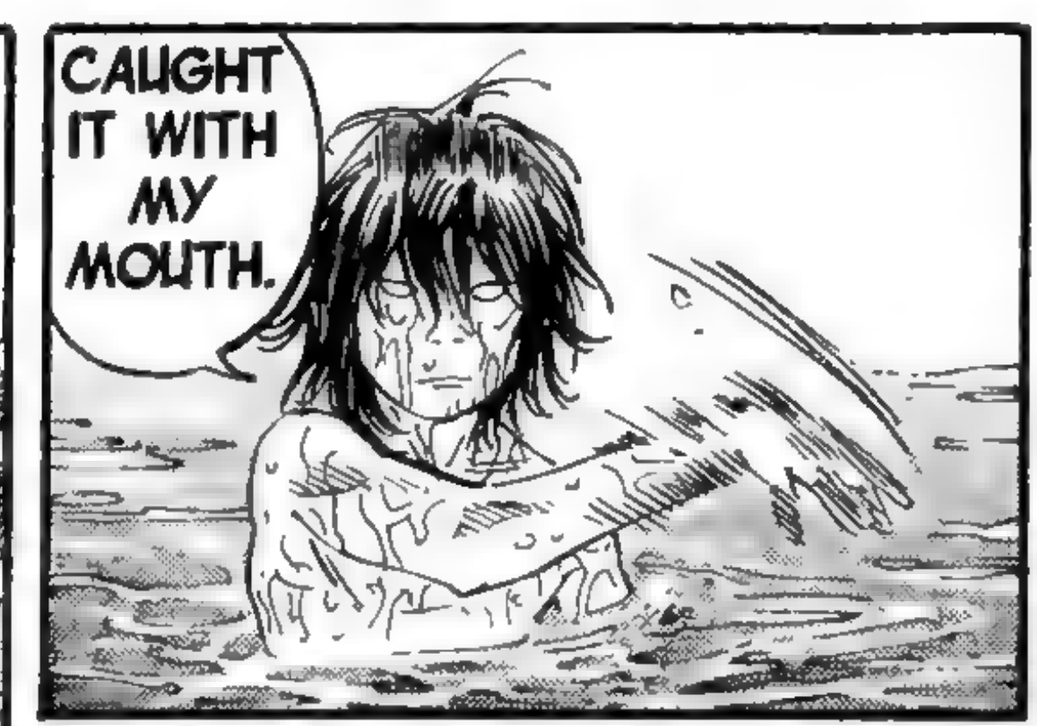
SPLISSH

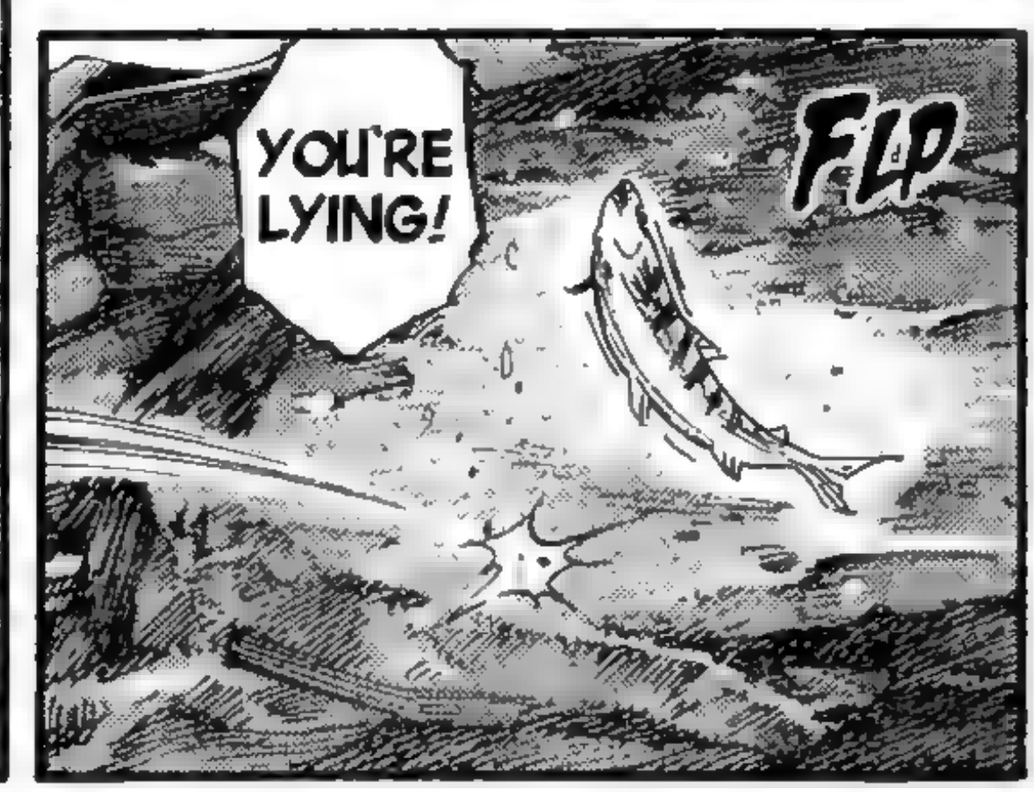
HM...

RIGHT ?

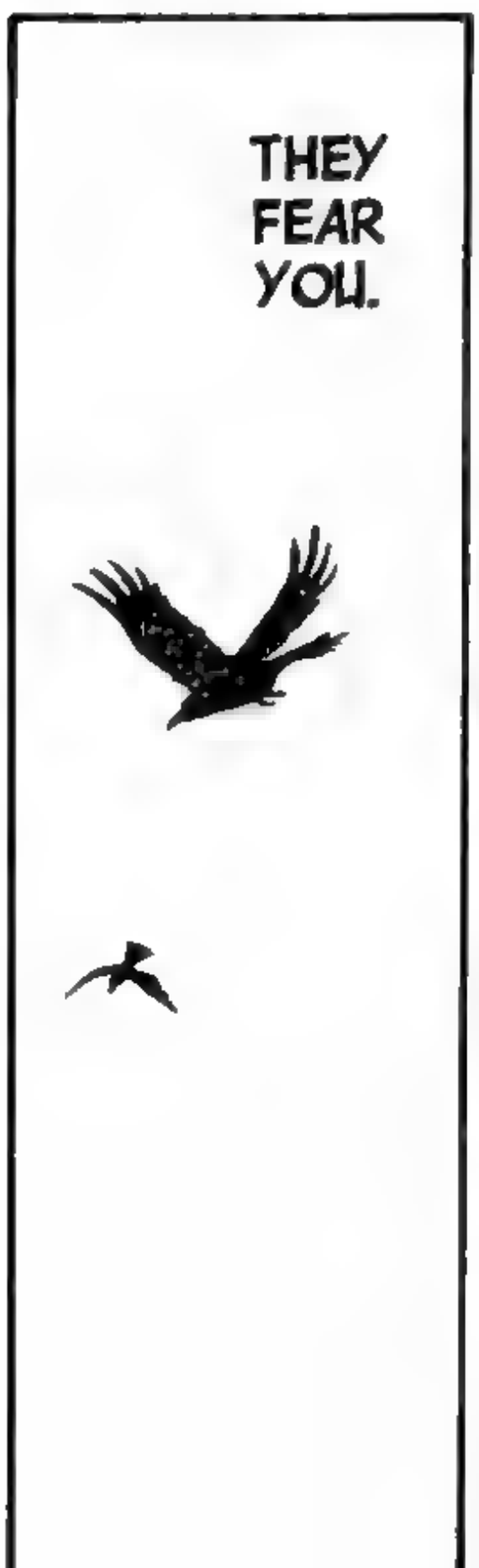
YOU PUT IT IN YOUR MOUTH AFTER YOU CAUGHT IT...

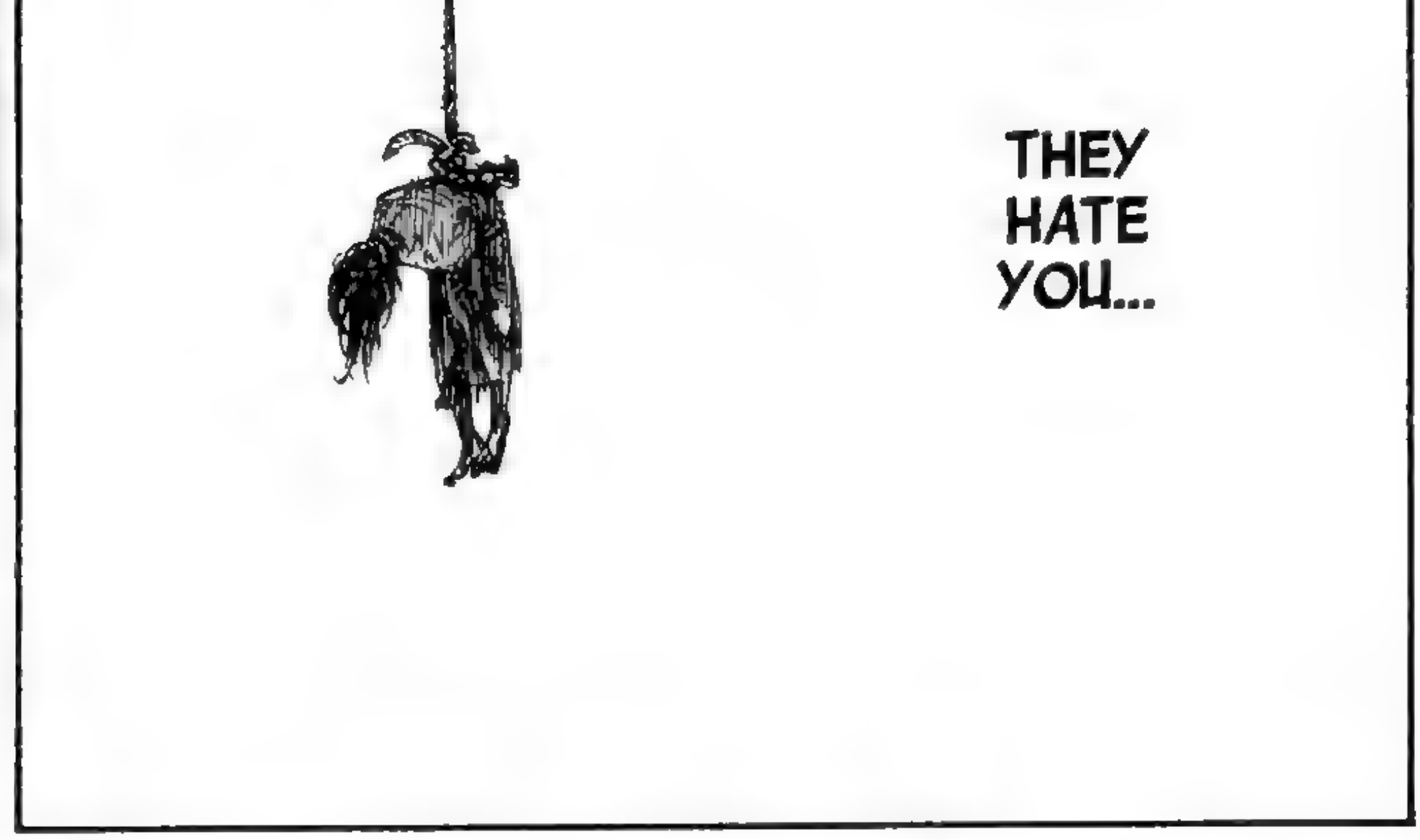
DID YOU CATCH THAT WITH YOUR MOUTH?!





(I'LL KILL YOU, YOU BASTARD MIYAMOTO MUSASHI. MIHARA UMACHIYONOSUKE)





NO MATTER HOW NARROW THE PATH...

...YOU STILL FORGE AHEAD.

JOINING ME LIKE THIS IN THE TEA CEREMONY WILL DO.

WELL...

ALL I DID WAS OFFER YOU AN EMPTY ROOM.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO PAY ME BACK.

THE HEAD OF THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL IS DEAD.

MIYAMOTO MUSASHI, I DID NOT BELIEVE YOU.

SO YOU DID CUT HIM DOWN.

BECAUSE ...

THANK YOU FOR THIS FINE CUP OF TEA.

BUT PLEASE, NO MORE.

HA HA HA.

...WHEN WE FIRST MET...

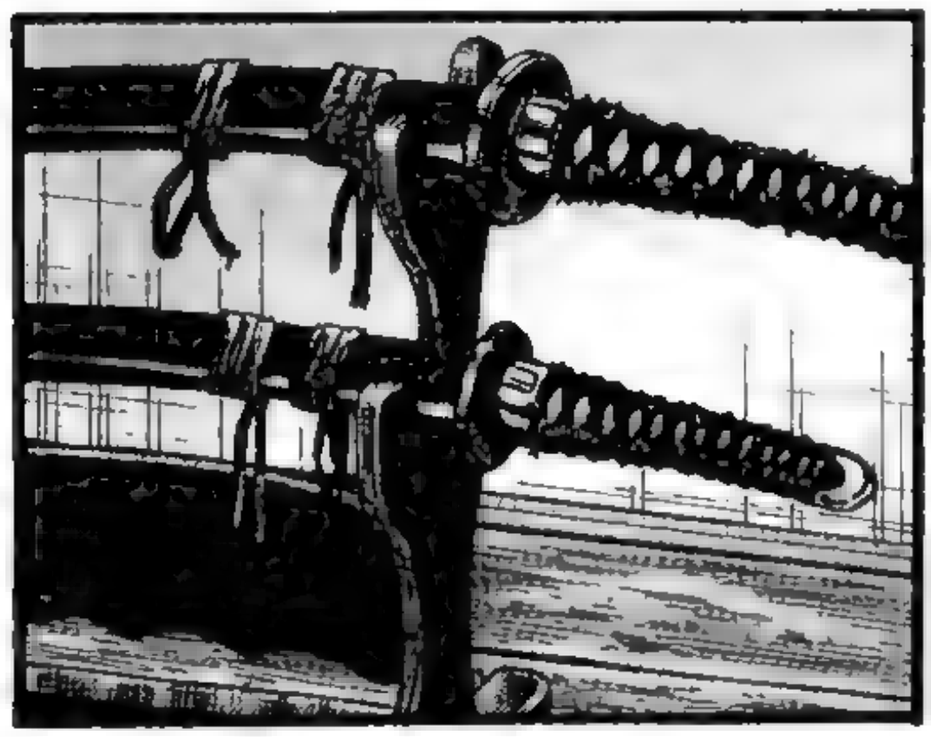
...YOU HAD ONLY JUST EXCHANGED BLOWS...

...WITH SUCH A FORMIDABLE FIGHTER...

YOU WIPED OFF YOUR BLOOD...

...AS IF WIPING OFF SWEAT FROM A HARD DAY'S WORK.

YET YOU SEEMED QUITE SERENE.



...
GO AHEAD.
MAY I TAKE A LOOK AT IT?
FP

NO INSCRIP-TION YET...
HMM...
...YOU SEEM SO ADEPT AT HANDLING A SWORD.
ODD ...

!

.....

HA HA. I FELT LIKE I'D BEEN CUT.
HA HA HA.
?
.....

I'M RETIRED NOW.

MUSASHI ...

THANK YOU.

I AM HON'AMI KŌETSU.

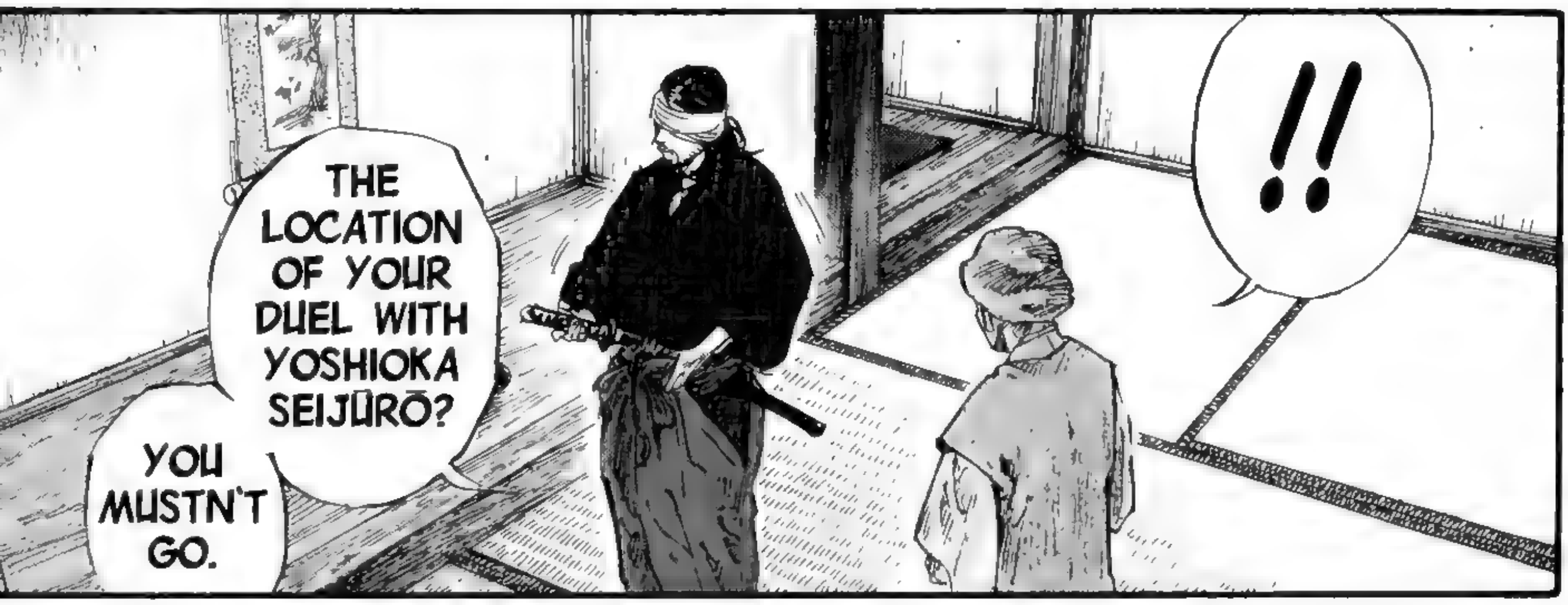
I COME FROM A LINE OF SWORD SHARPENERS.

...IT MADE ME WANT TO WATCH YOU IN A FIGHT.

I'M SURE IT WOULD BE A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT TO BEHOLD.

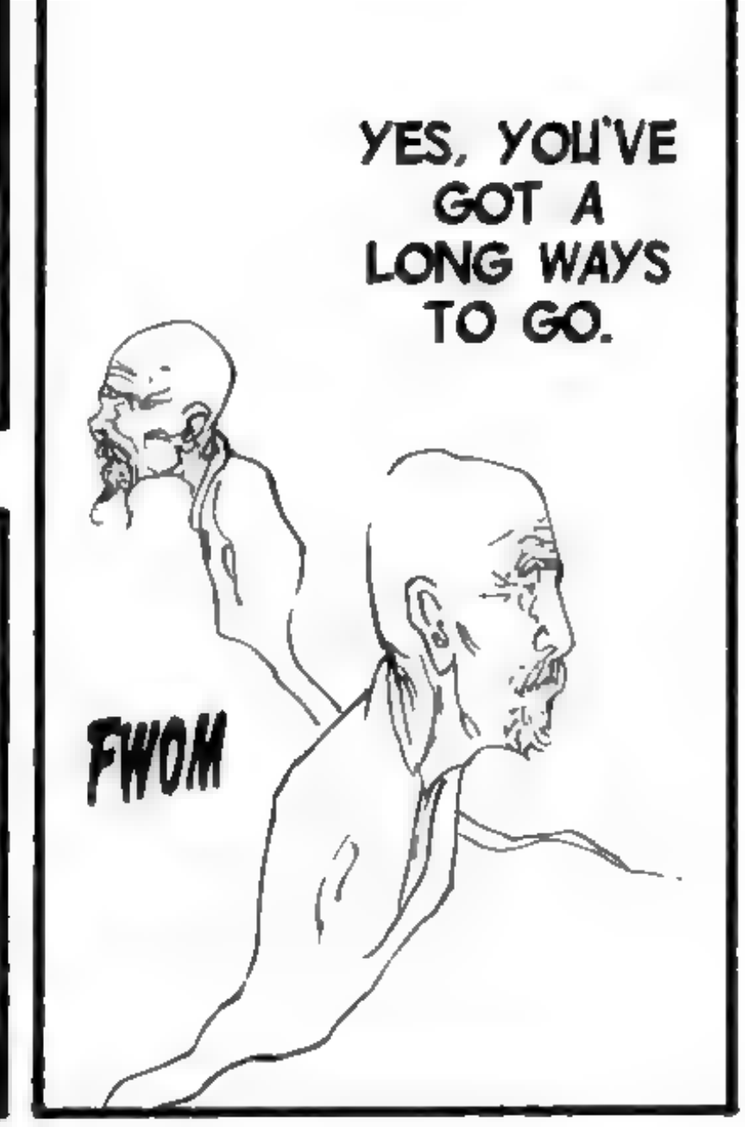
THERE'S A PLACE CALLED RENGEŌIN TEMPLE.

I WANT TO HAVE A LOOK AT IT.

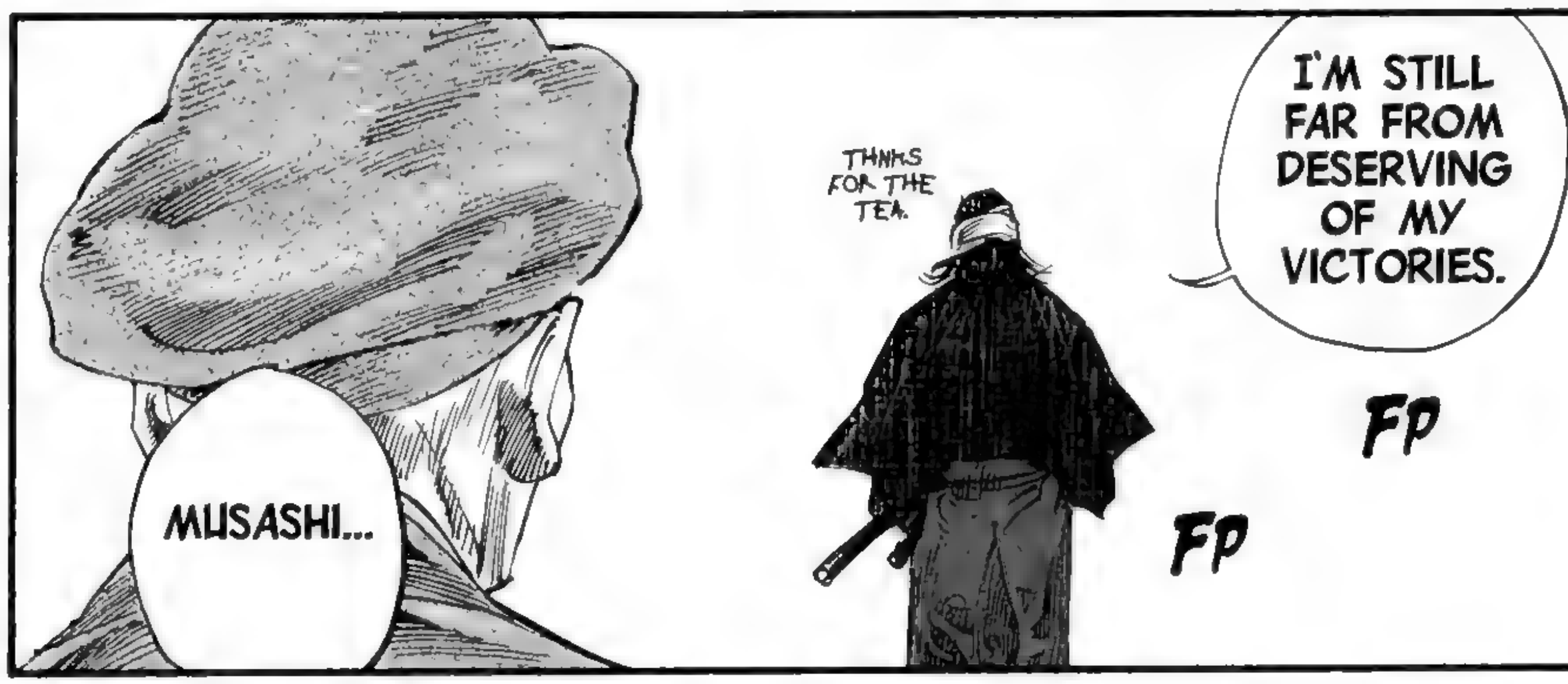


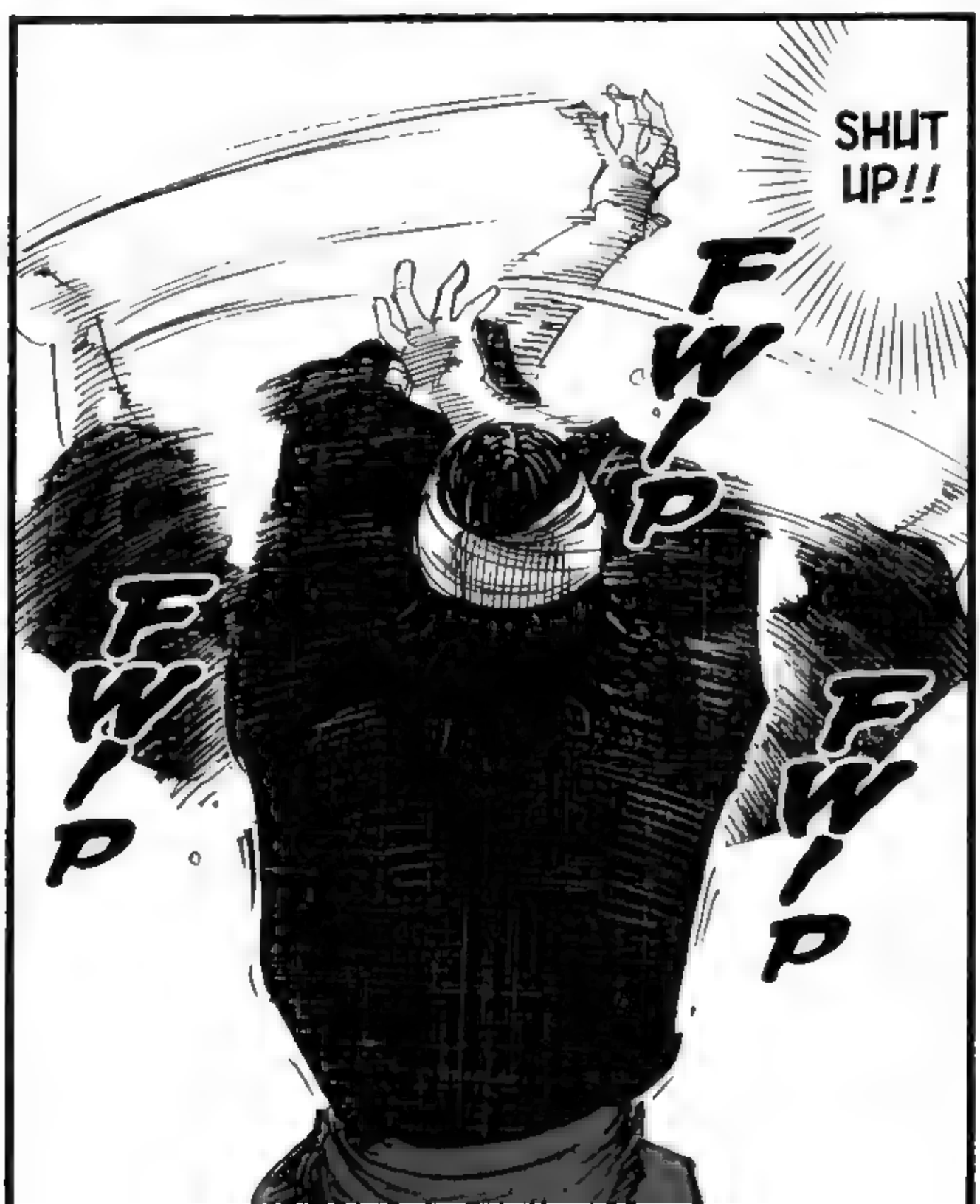
.....

I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER HOW I WON...


YES, YOU'VE GOT A LONG WAYS TO GO.
FWOM

YOU'VE GOT A WAYS TO GO.
HRMPH


MUSASHI...
THANKS FOR THE TEA.
I'M STILL FAR FROM DESERVING OF MY VICTORIES.
FP
FP


SHUT UP!!
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP

THAT'S RIGHT.
A VERY VERY LONG WAYS.
HRMPH
FWOM
A LONG WAY TO GO.

FICH

FICH

FICH

FICH

FICH

SOME-THING ODD ABOUT THAT GUY...

YEAH.

FICH

FICH

FICH

FICH

FICH

I'M NO CRIMINAL.

FICH

THERE'S NO WAY I'M GOING TO BE HOLED UP THERE UNTIL THE DAY OF THE MATCH.

FICH

BESIDES, IT'S NOT LIKE ANYONE WOULD RECOGNIZE ME.

FICH

.....

GASP

...!!

FICH

FICH

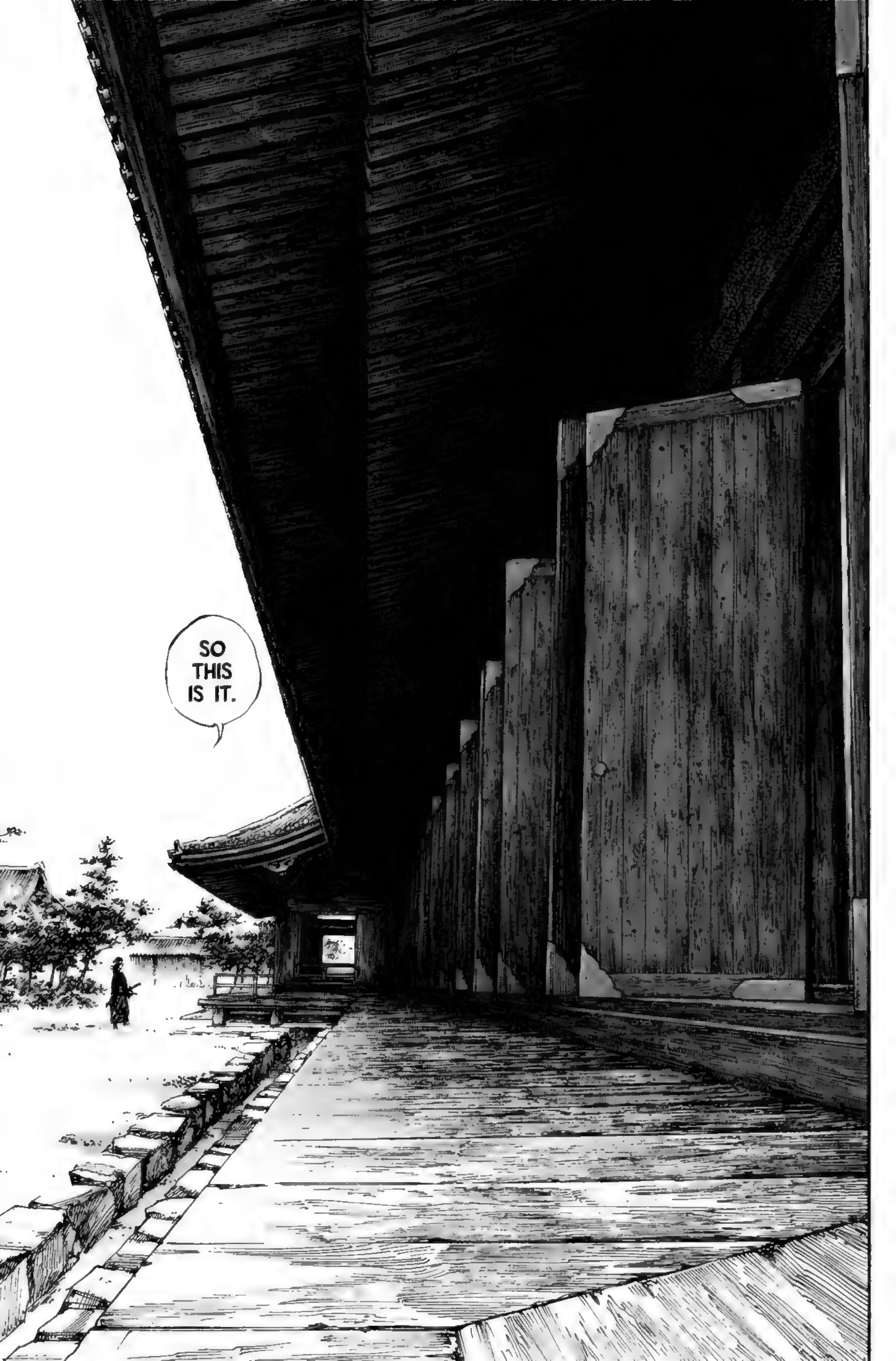
IT'S HIM!

HEY... ISN'T THAT ...?

FICH

FICH

FICH


SO THIS IS IT.

.....

!
FIP
FSH

HM?

RENGEÔIN TEMPLE...

Vagabond

YOU'LL SEE, THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL IS GOING AFTER MUSASHI.

I DON'T KNOW. I THINK THEY'RE GOING TO SWALLOW THEIR PRIDE AND TRY TO GET RID OF MUSASHI.

HM...BUT WHAT ABOUT HIS MATCH WITH DEN-SHICHIRŌ?

AFTER ALL, THE HEAD OF THEIR SCHOOL WAS KILLED.

#195 | Confrontation of Rivals

THIS IS WHERE THE MATCH IS SUPPOSED TO TAKE PLACE.

HE'S CHECKING THE AREA.

THAT'S GOTTA BE MUSASHI.

THINK OF HOW FAMOUS YOU'D BE IF YOU KILLED HIM NOW.

WHO'S GOING FIRST!?

.....

YES!

I SEE.

WOW!

THAT BANDAGE MUST BE FROM HIS FIGHT WITH SEIJŪRŌ.

FICH

FICH

!

.....

FICH

FICH

FICH

HEY...

HEY...

DAMN YOU...

.....

FICH

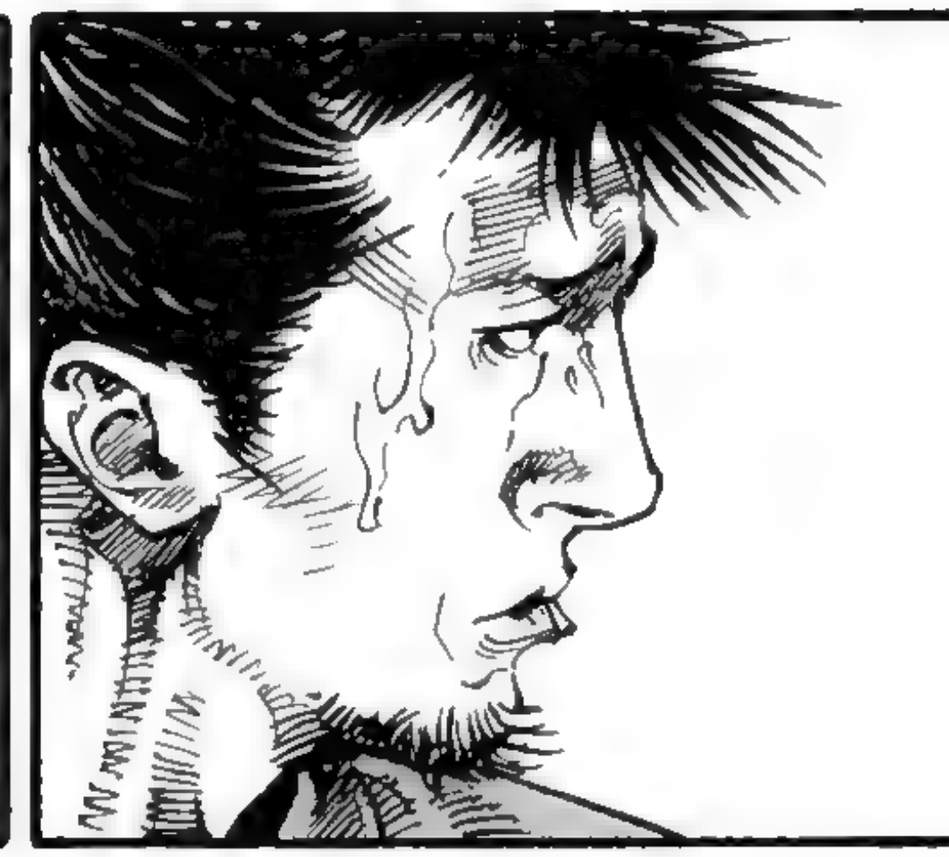
FICH

FICH

...

...

FICH



I'M STARVING.

BUCK-WHEAT DUMP-LINGS.
RIGHT AWAY.

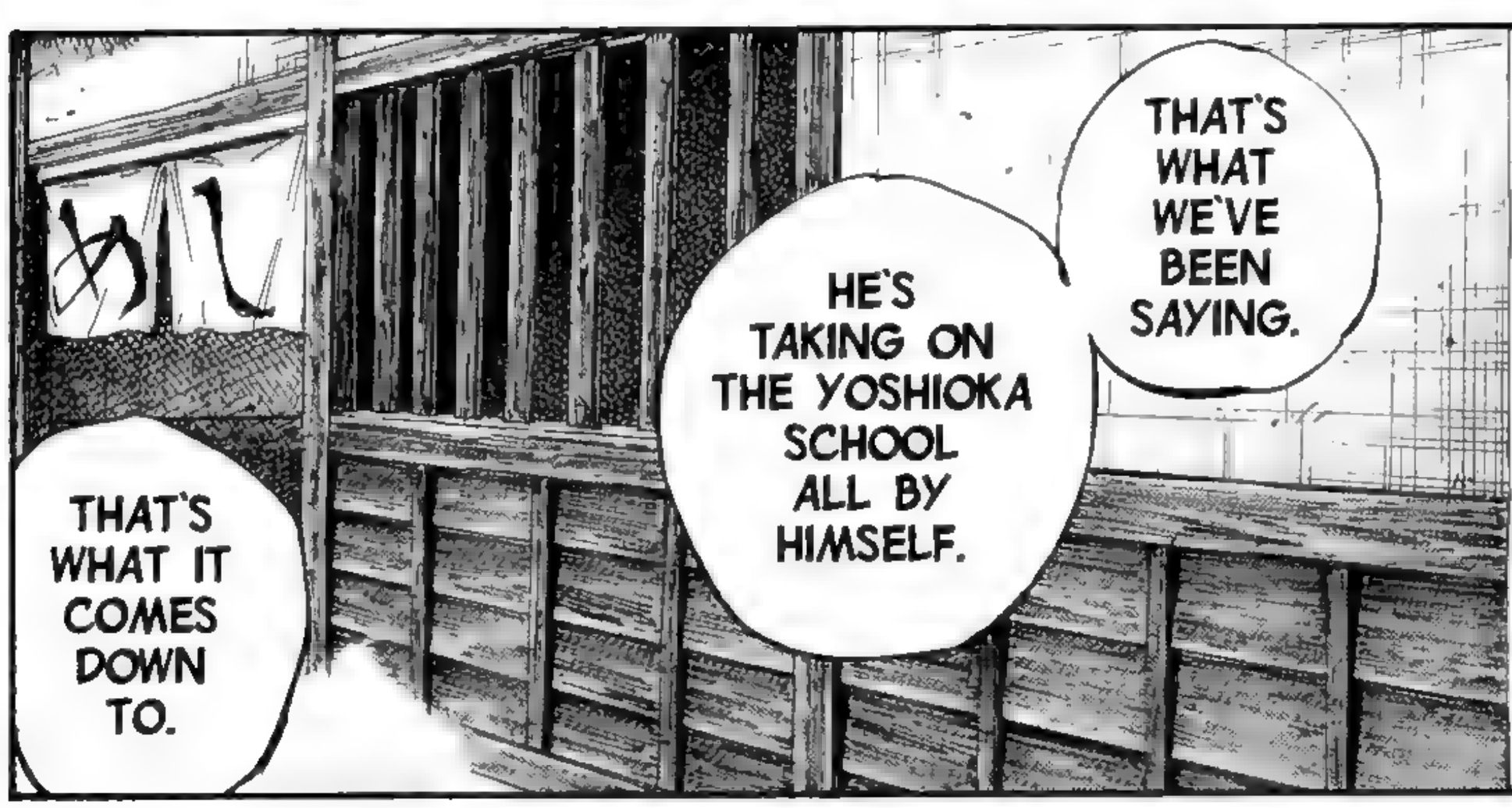
...BUT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE MASTER BEING KILLED, RIGHT?

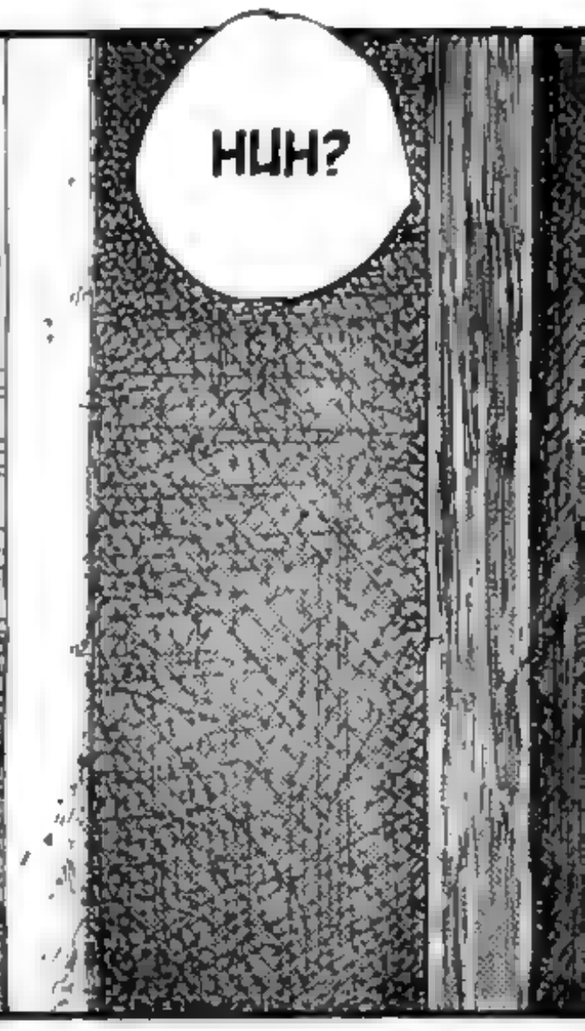
HMM...
SO HOW COULD HIS YOUNGER BROTHER DENSHICHIRŌ POSSIBLY BEAT MUSASHI?
I HEARD THE YOUNGER BROTHER IS MORE FORMIDABLE.

THIS...

IS HE REALLY THAT STRONG?
IS HE...
THIS MIYA-MOTO MUSASHI ...

HUH?
SAY...


THAT'S WHAT IT COMES DOWN TO.
HE'S TAKING ON THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL ALL BY HIMSELF.
THAT'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN SAYING.


HUH?

HMPH.
ACTUALLY, I AM SASAKI...
THAT'S RIGHT! KOJIRŌ! I'VE HEARD OF HIM!
HE'S BEEN MAKING A NAME FOR HIMSELF!

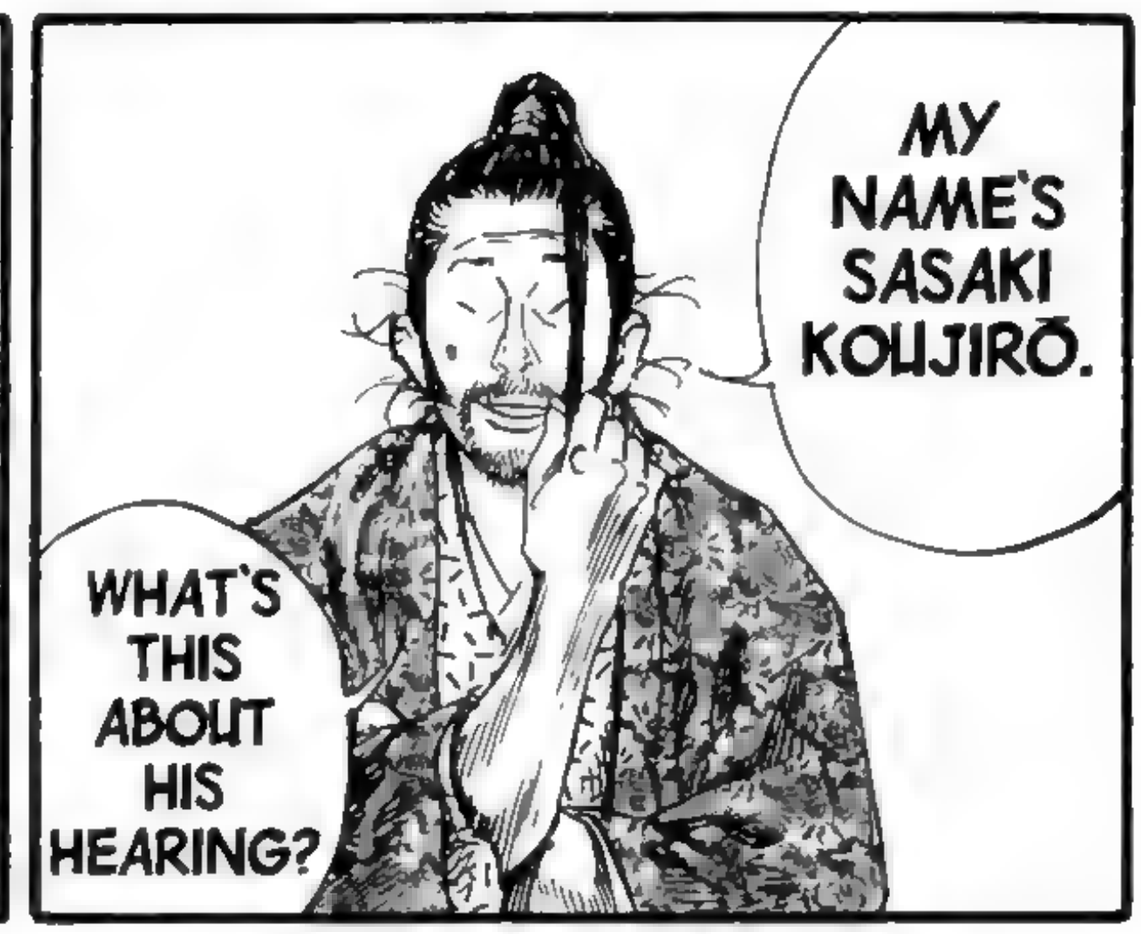
SPEAKING OF STRONG FIGHTERS, WHAT ABOUT SASAKI KOJIRŌ?
.....
WHO?

HUH?

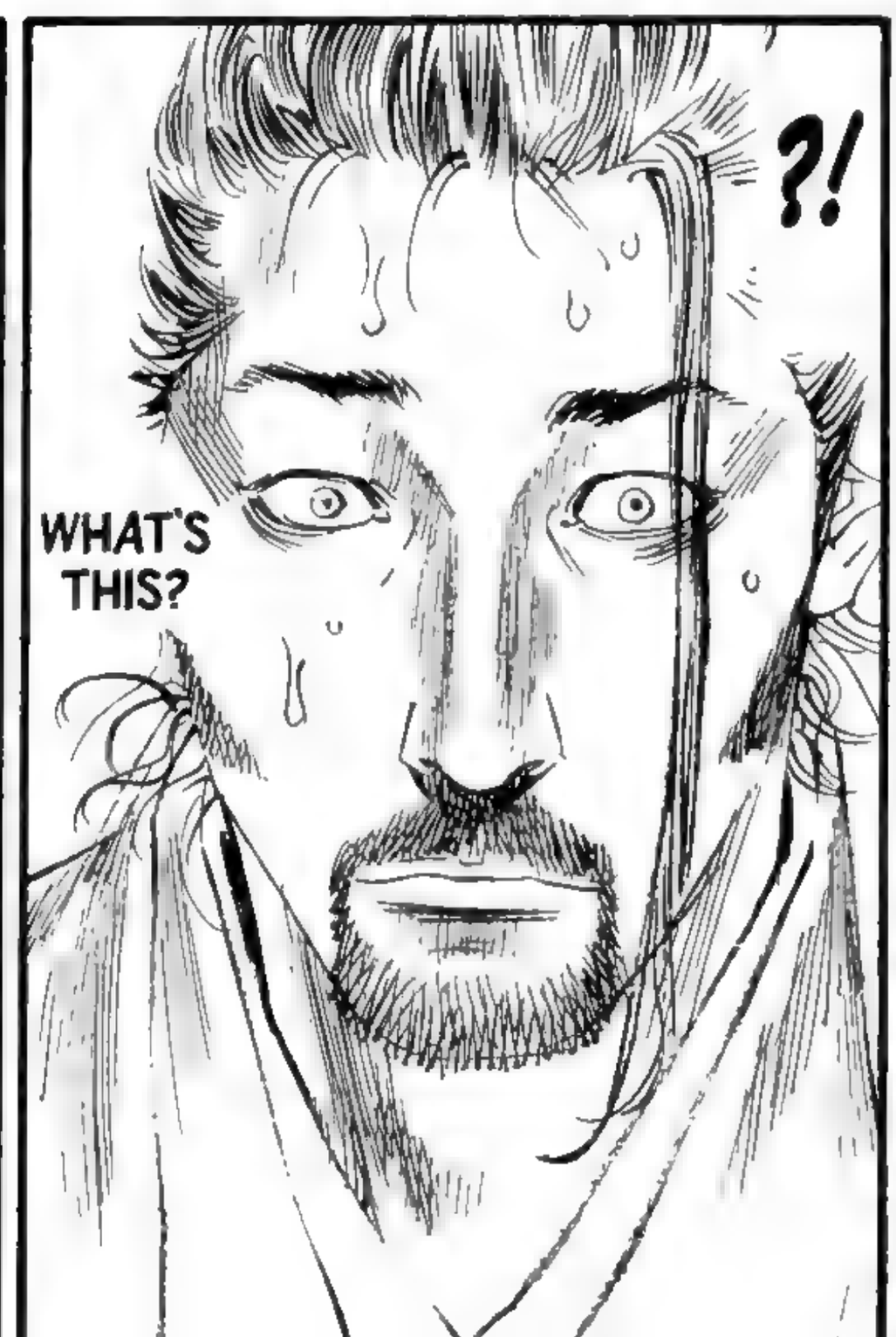
THAT IS...

...KOUJIRŌ!
I HEAR HE'S DEAF.

HA HA HA.
HA HA HA. THAT COULD GET CONFUS-ING.
YOU'VE GOT THAT RIGHT! HA HA HA...


WHAT'S THIS ABOUT HIS HEARING?
MY NAME'S SASAKI KOUJIRŌ.

SASAKI KOJIRŌ IS DEAF!?


?!
WHAT'S THIS?

HE CAN FIGHT EVEN THOUGH HE'S DEAF?
I WON'T BELIEVE IT UNTIL I SEE IT FOR MYSELF.

THIS CAN'T BE! IT MUST BE A MISTAKE.

IMPOSSIBLE! HE'S FORMIDABLE ENOUGH TO RECEIVE A CERTIFICATE!!

FICH

FICH

FICH

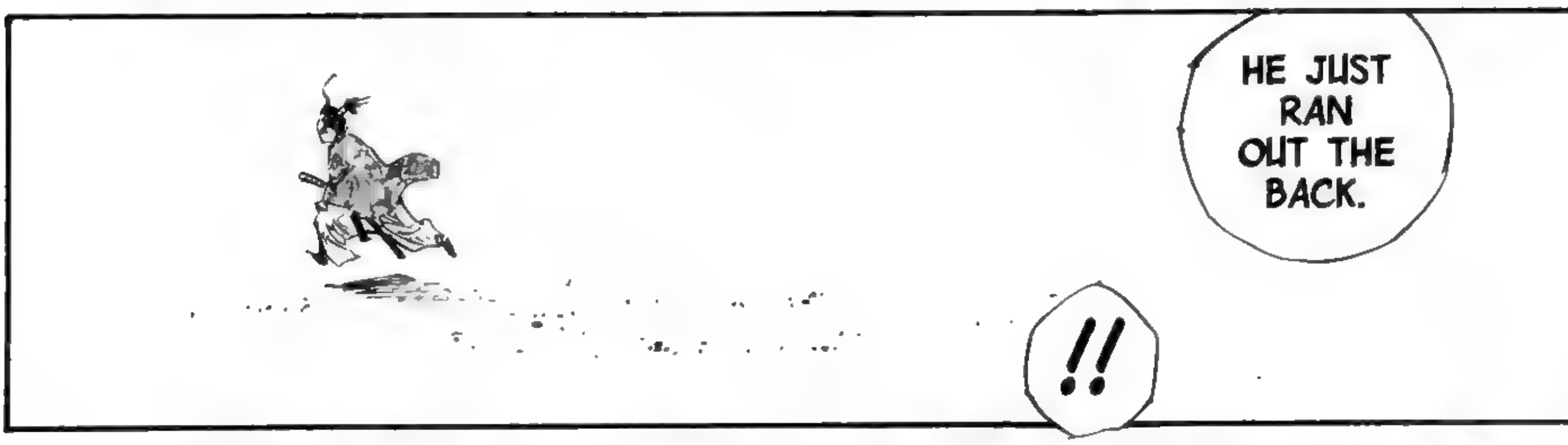
FICH

SO THE BIG ONE IS DENSHICHIRŌ ?
P- PRETTY IMPRESSIVE!
WHO SAID HE DIDN'T AMOUNT TO MUCH ?

HEY...
...YOU HAVEN'T PAID FOR YOUR FRIEND.
HUH? KOUJIRŌ ?
WHAT ?

MUSASHI CAN'T WIN.
WELL...
THAT WAS SCARY.

FWOOP


HE JUST RAN OUT THE BACK.
!!

GASP
THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A YEAR AGO...
BUT IF THEY CATCH ME THEY'LL ROAST ME ALIVE FOR ARSON!!

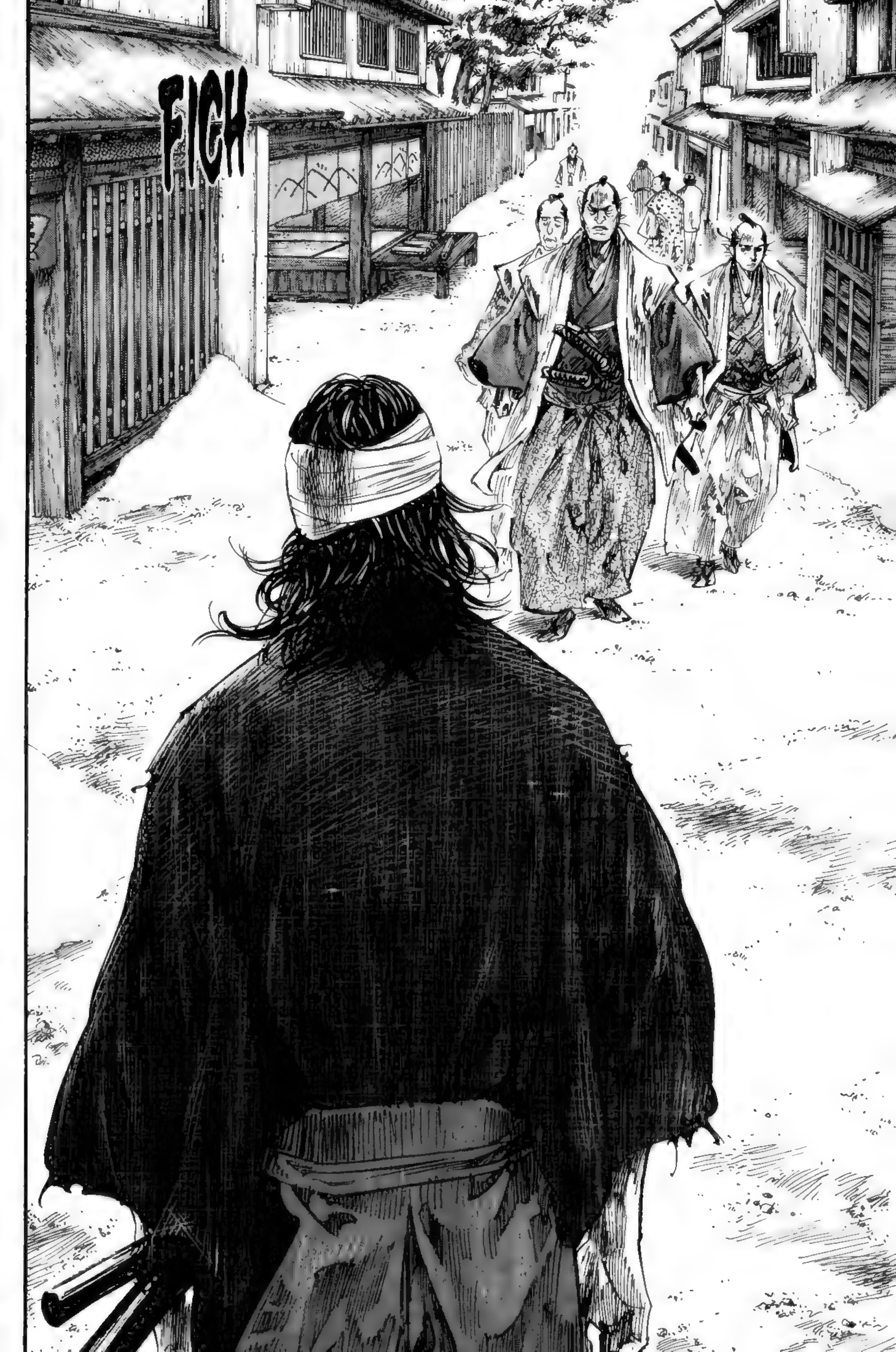
OF COURSE, I'VE CHANGED QUITE A BIT FROM THAT WANTED SIGN.

DENSHICHIRŌ MIGHT RECOGNIZE ME.
HUF
HUF
HUF
HE EVEN BEAT ME UP BEFORE.

I KNEW I SHOULDN'T HAVE COME HERE.

BUT THEY'LL STILL RECOGNIZE ME!!

THAT WAS...


FICH

HMM...

FICH

CHK
FWOOSH
NO, IIEDA.

HOW WAS HE...?

HOW'D MY BROTHER FIGHT?

HE'S SEVERAL TIMES BETTER THAN YOU.

Vagabond

(Wanted: Hon'iden Matahachi)

#196
Return of the Vainglorious

...A MAN DRINKING ALONE IN THE BACK STOOD UP...
WHEN THEY REALLY STARTED INSULTING THE YOSHIOKA...

YOU KNOW THE RUMORS.
THEY WERE TALKING ABOUT THE YOSHIOKA...

THIS COULD BE A PROB-LEM.
SOME-ONE FROM THE YOSHI-OKA...?

HE WAS A DEMON.
BRR
BRR
BRR
THAT WAS NO MAN.

TŌJI.

I RE-
MEMBER
THAT
NAME.

!!

FICH

DON'T WANT THEM TO KNOW THAT MY TIMING IS OFF BECAUSE I ONLY HAVE ONE GOOD EYE.

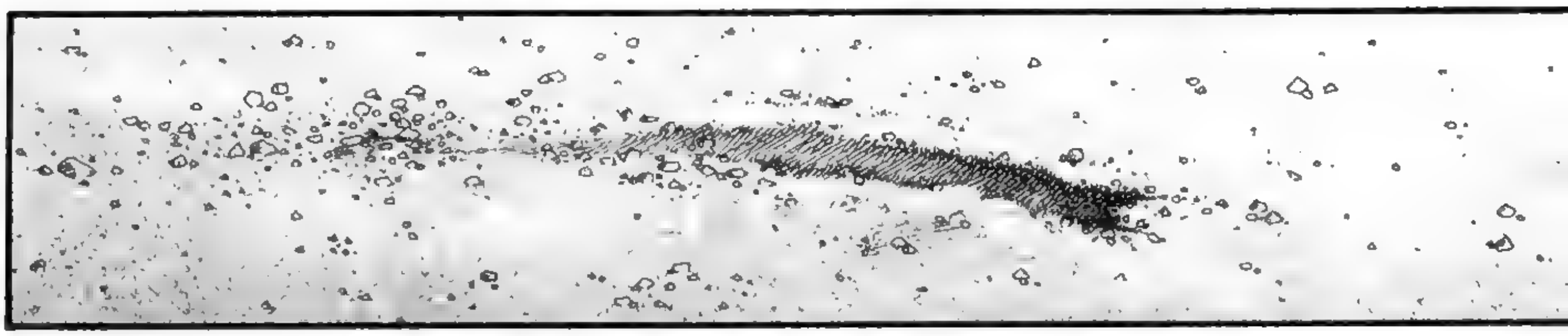
CUT HIM DOWN, DEN-SHICHIRŌ !!

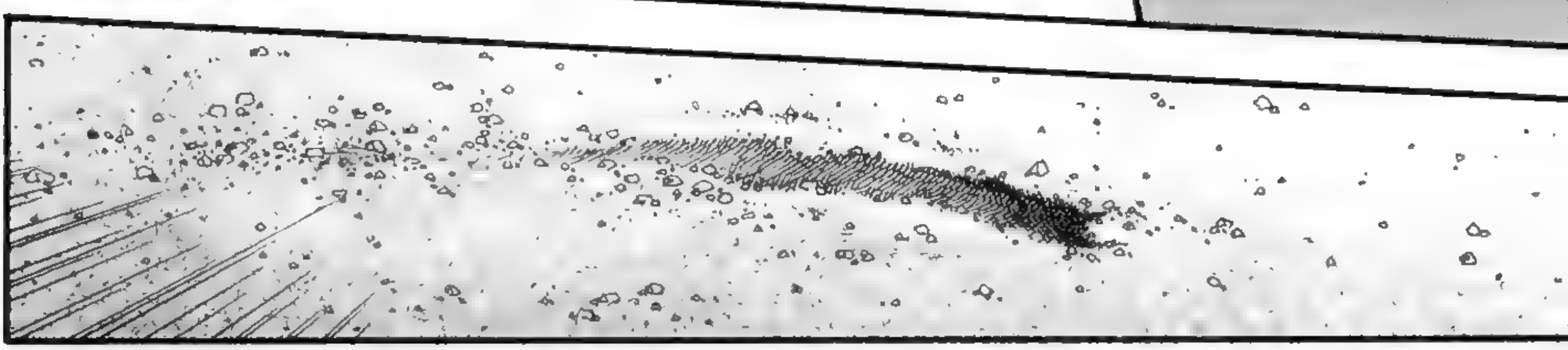
FICH

WELL, I DON'T HAVE A CHOICE!!

AND THEN...

IF DENSHICHIRŌ ATTACKS, I WON'T SEE IT COMING.





CRASH

GRB

...
GLUP

YOU'RE STRONGER...
HUF
HUF
HUF

.....
...WHILE I ONLY BECAME WEAKER...

I DON'T UNDER-STAND...
HAH!

SO EVEN THE SWORD HAS FORSAKEN ME.

GION TŌJI WAS ONE OF THE TEN SWORDSMEN OF THE YOSHIOKA.

HE WAS BANISHED FROM THE SCHOOL.

BUT NEWS OF OUR MASTER'S DEATH MUST HAVE BEEN A SHOCK TO HIM.

YOU MUST UNDER-STAND.

MY APOLOGIES.

...AND GIVEN THAT THE PERPETRATOR IS NOW DEAD.

WELL, THE THREE VICTIMS WERE UNKNOWN RŌNIN.

HUF

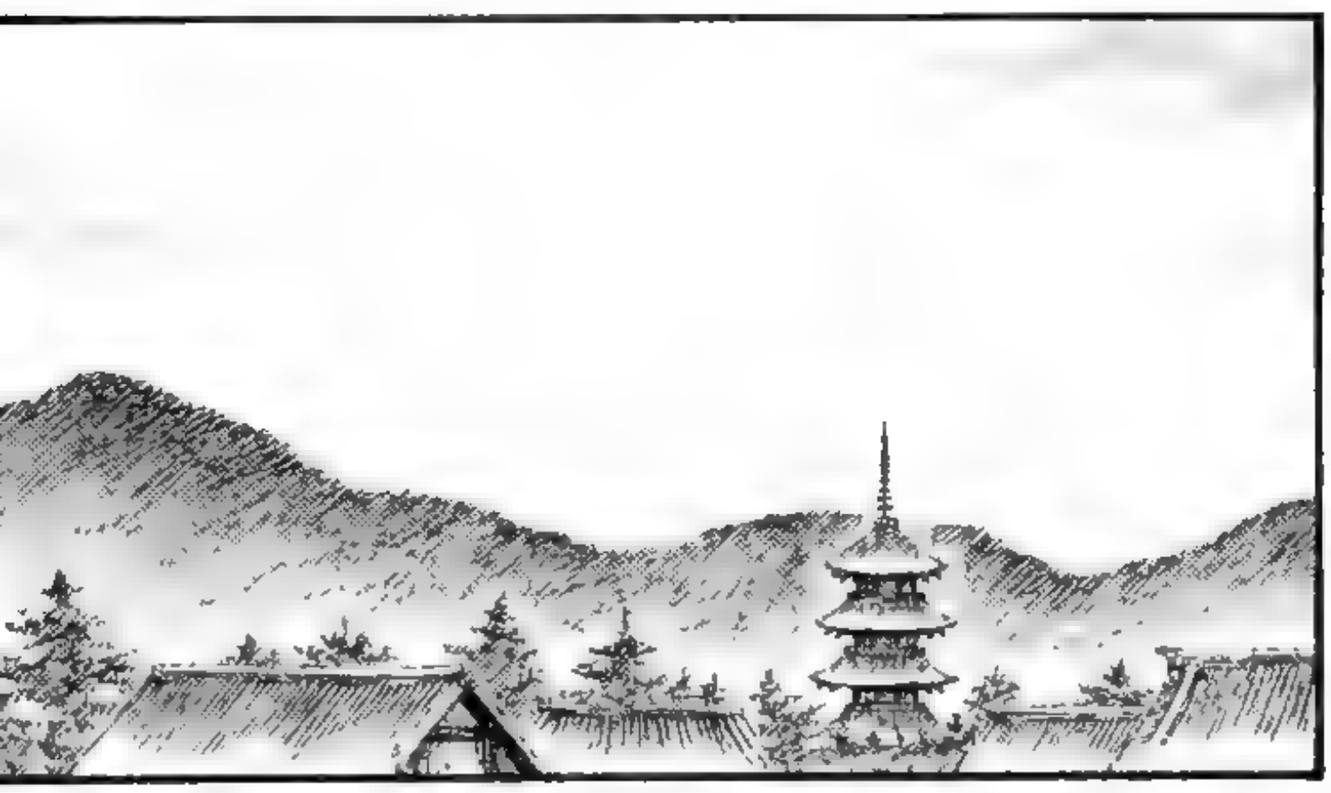
HUF

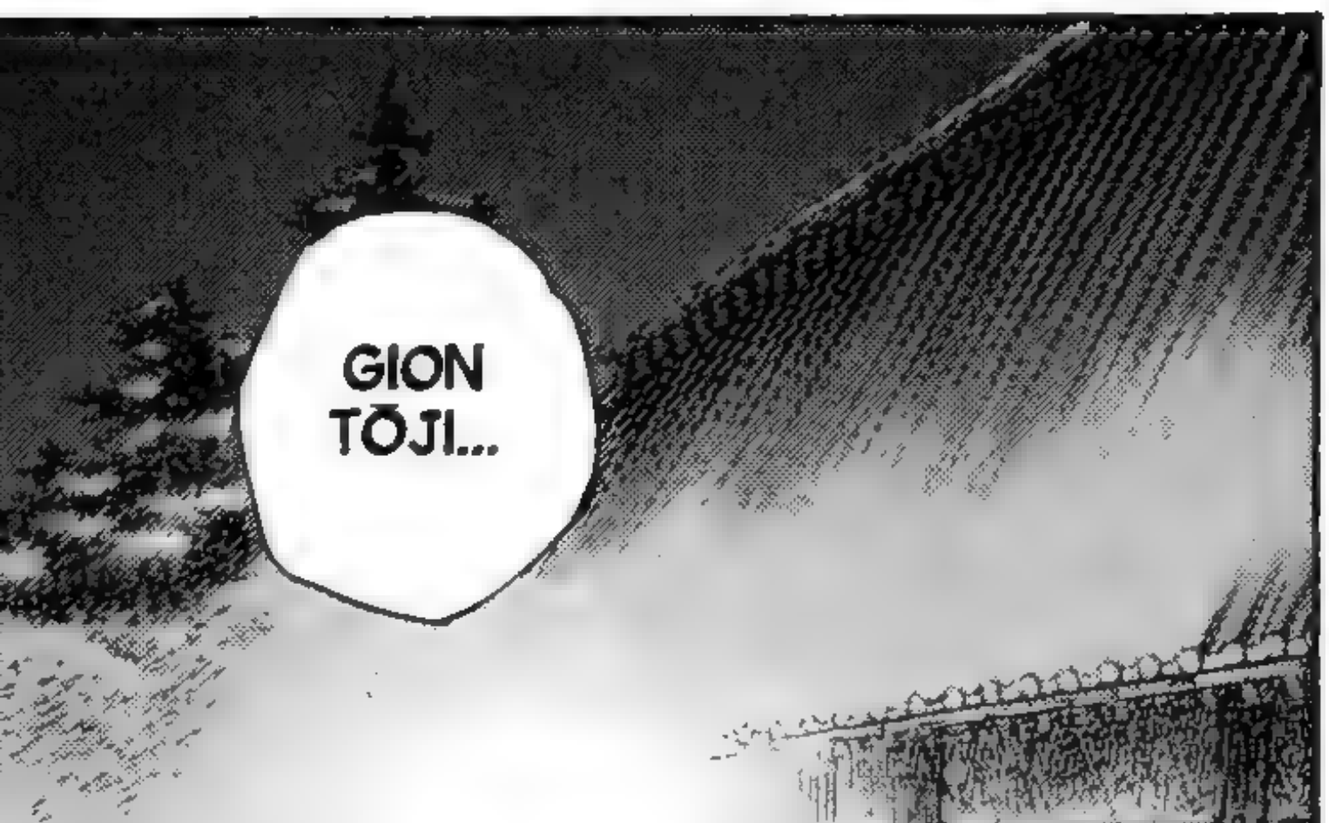
.....

.....

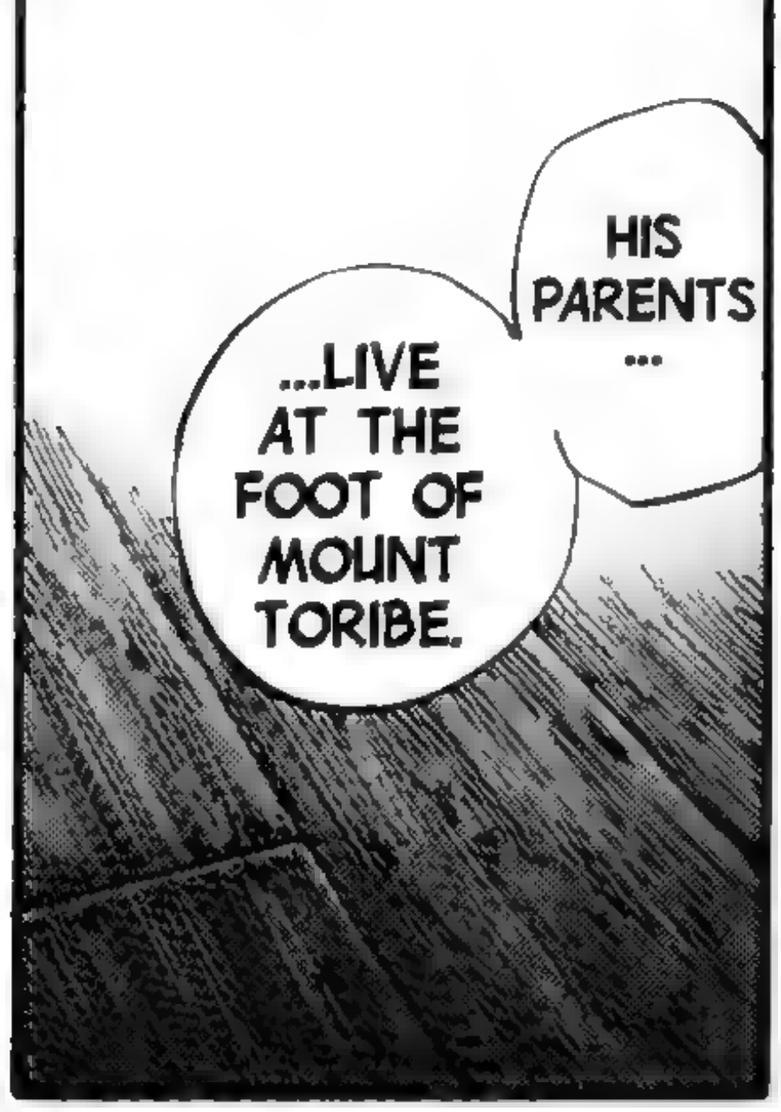
...I WOULDN'T HAVE SEEN YOU COMING.
IF YOU HAD ATTACKED ME...
HUF
HUF

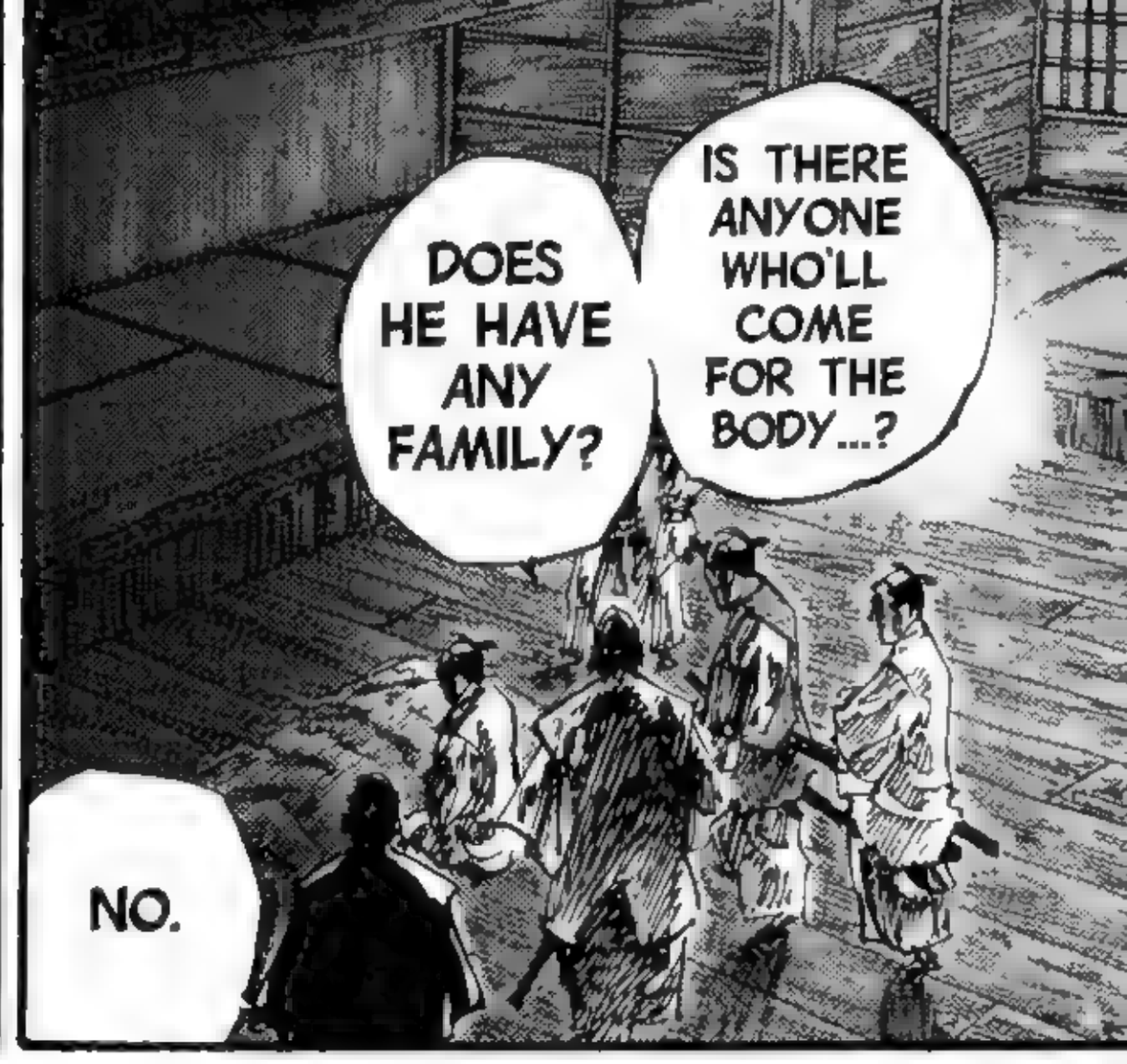
FICH
FICH
FICH
YOU SHOULD BE TENDING TO THE BUSINESS MATTERS OF YOUR SCHOOL.




GION TŌJI...

I JUST WENT OVER THERE.


HIS PARENTS ...
...LIVE AT THE FOOT OF MOUNT TORIBE.

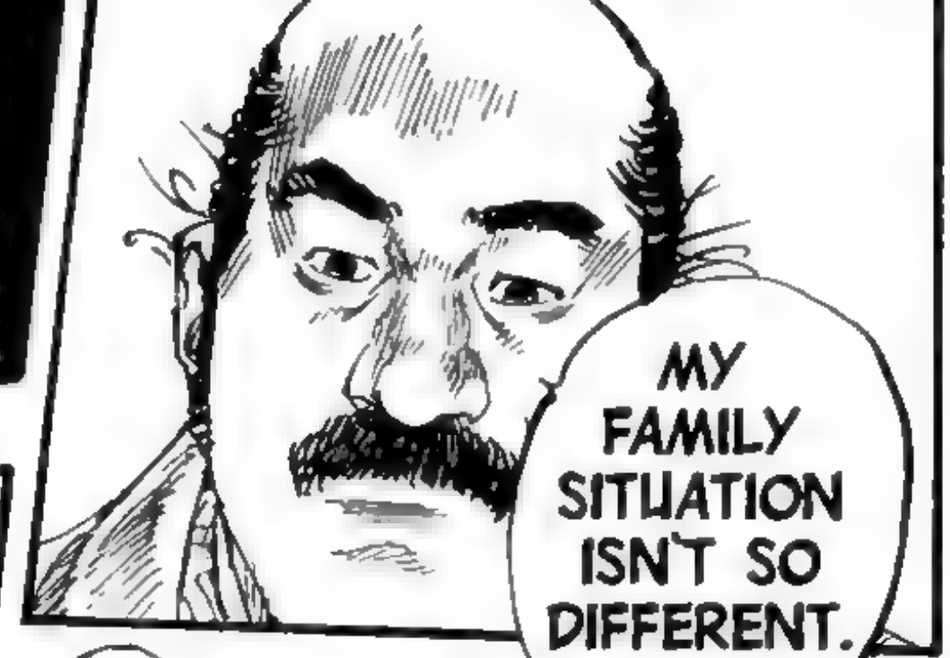

DOES HE HAVE ANY FAMILY?
IS THERE ANYONE WHO'LL COME FOR THE BODY...?
NO.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

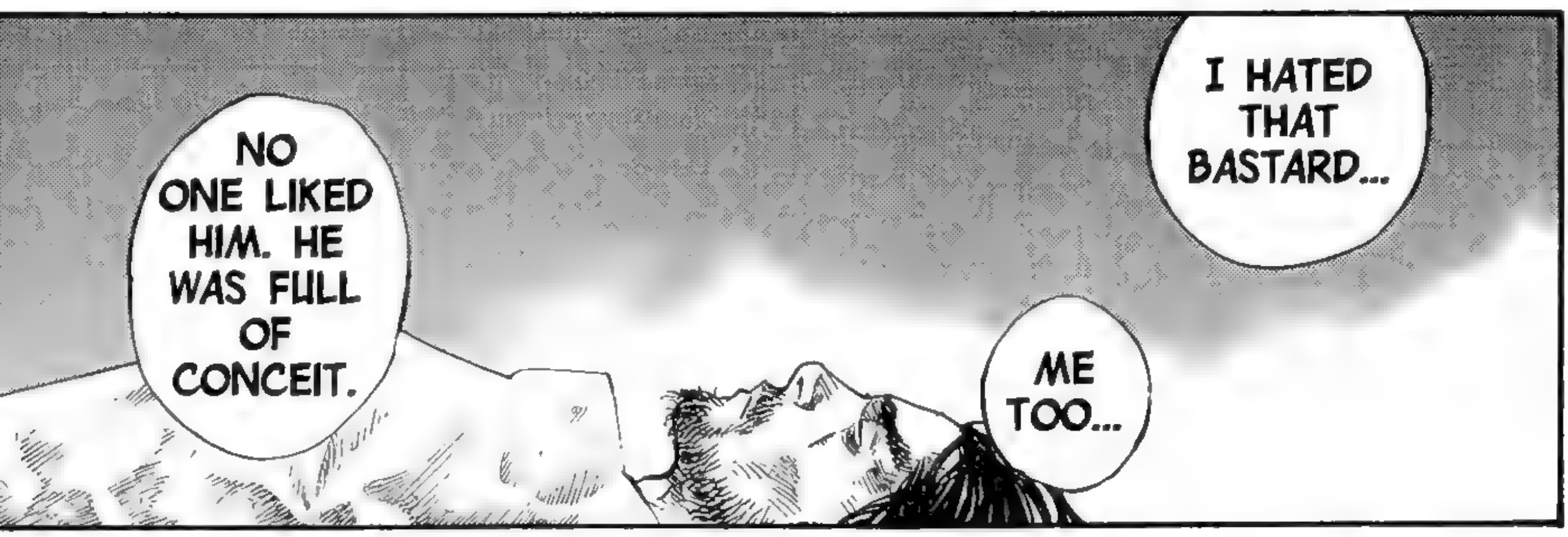
HE'S NO SON OF MINE.

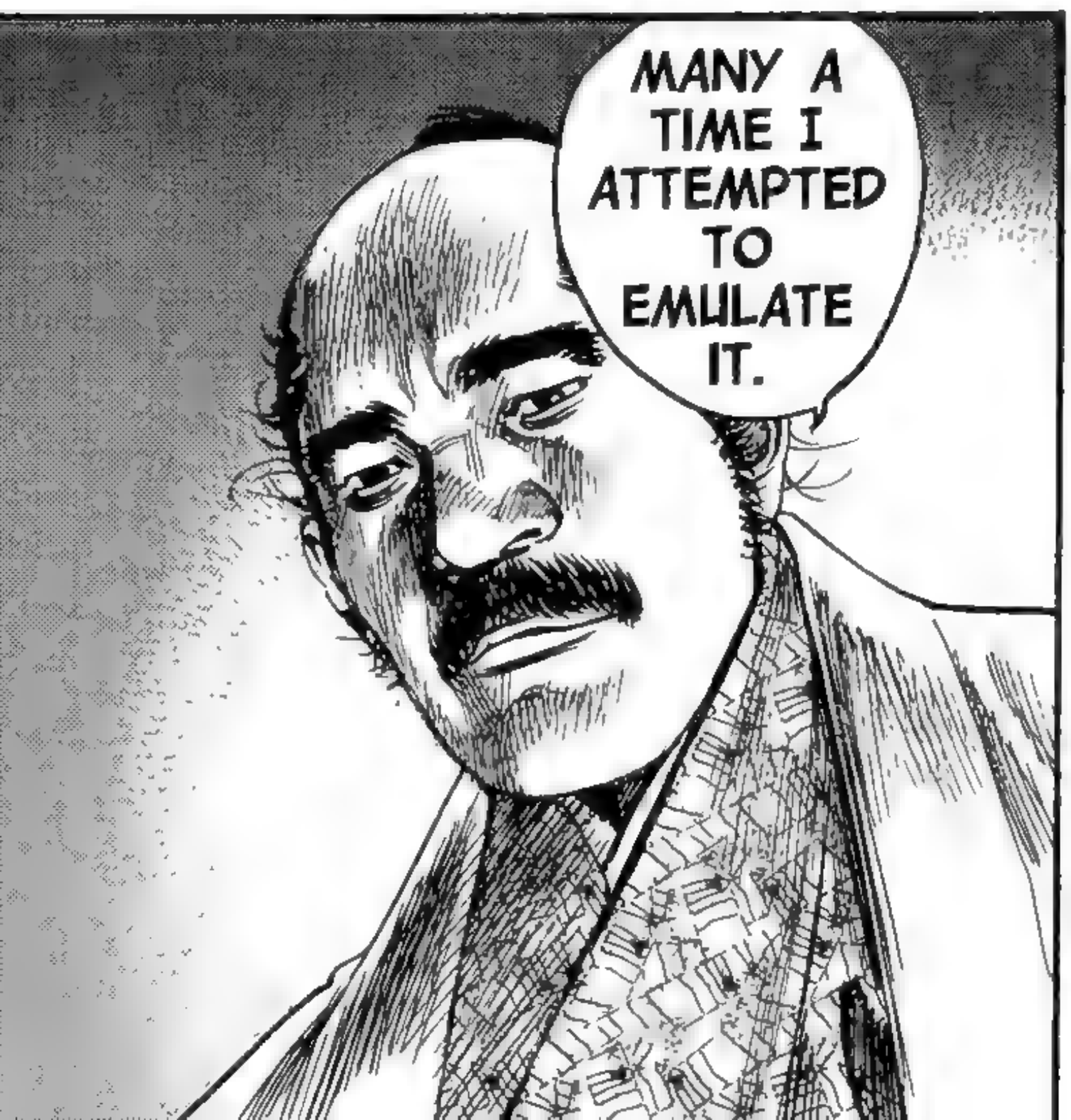
.....

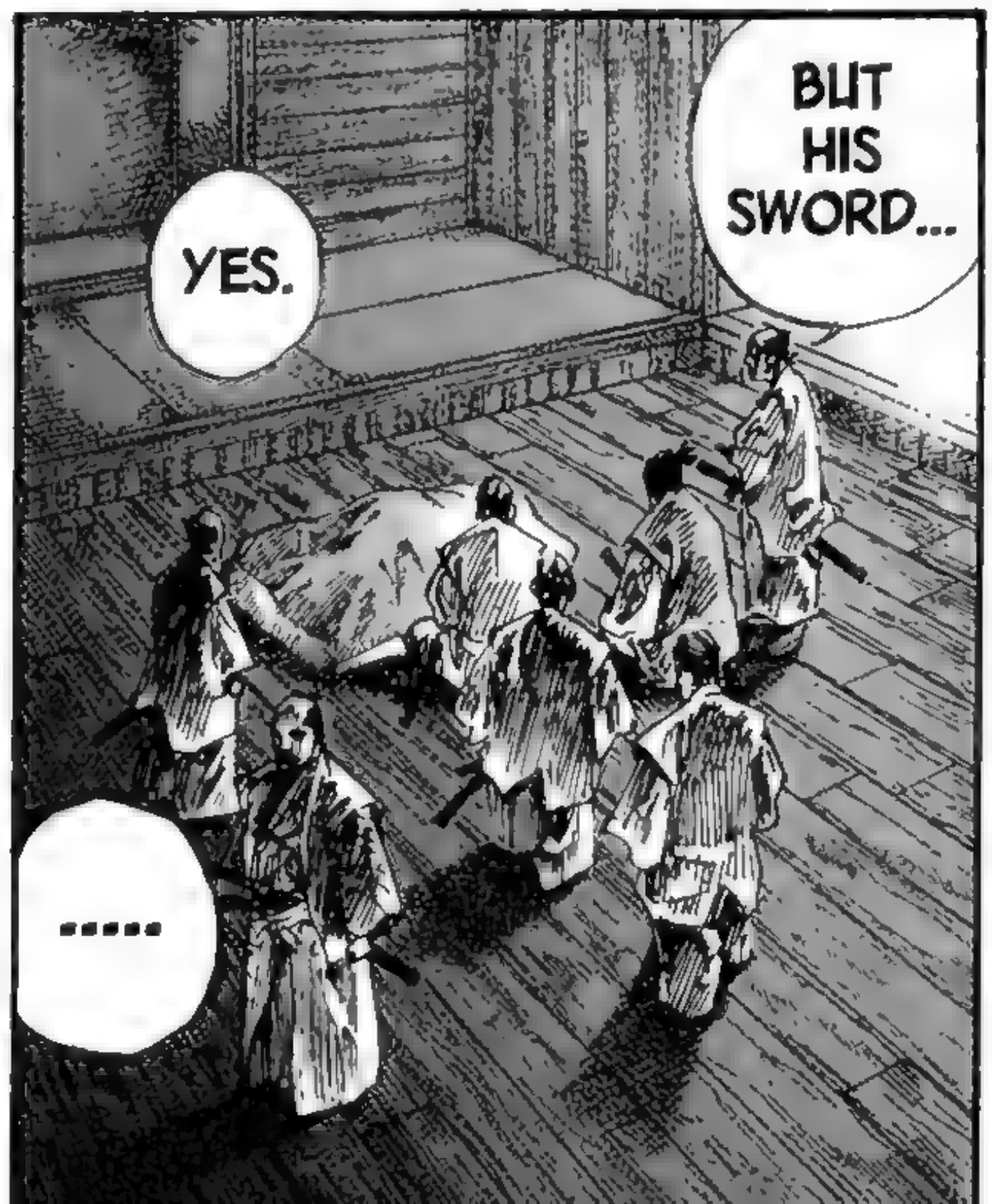
HE'S LUCKY HE EVEN HAD PARENTS.


MY FAMILY SITUATION ISN'T SO DIFFERENT.

HMPH.


NO ONE LIKED HIM. HE WAS FULL OF CONCEIT.
I HATED THAT BASTARD...
ME TOO...


MANY A TIME I ATTEMPTED TO EMULATE IT.


YES.
BUT HIS SWORD...
.....

GION TŌJI...
TO COME BACK TO US IN SUCH A STATE...

...IT WOULD BE INSANE FOR HIM TO FIGHT MUSASHI.

NOW THAT DENSHICHIRO IS THE HEAD OF THE SCHOOL...

IN THE COURSE OF A YEAR YOU'VE BECOME A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT MAN.

A DIFFERENT MAN...

WHY SHOULD WE PUT THE REPUTATION OF OUR SCHOOL WITH ITS ILLUSTRIOUS HISTORY ON THE LINE AGAINST THIS LONE RONIN.

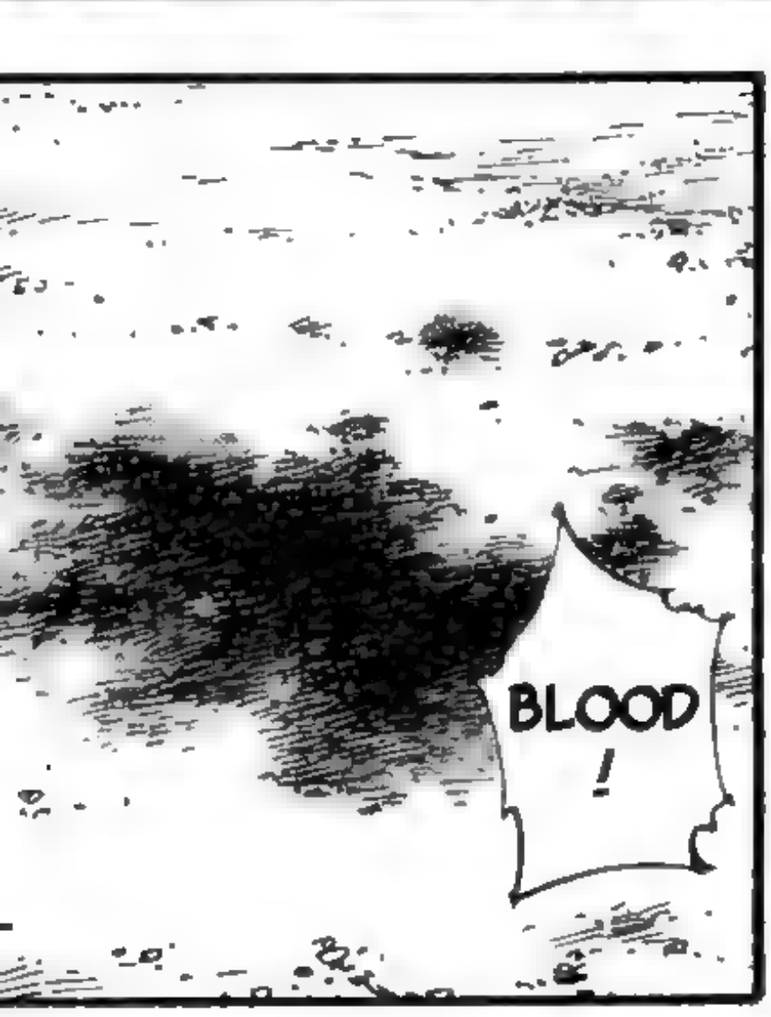
MUSASHI HAS NOTHING TO LOSE WHILE WE RISK LOSING EVERYTHING.

DEN-SHICHIRŌ MUST NOT DO THIS.

SOME-ONE WILL FIGHT IN HIS STEAD.

I HAVE A PLAN.

Vagabond


BLOOD !

THAT'S WHY THE STREETS ARE EMPTY.
IT'S BECAUSE OF THOSE MURDERS YESTER-DAY.

FICH
FICH

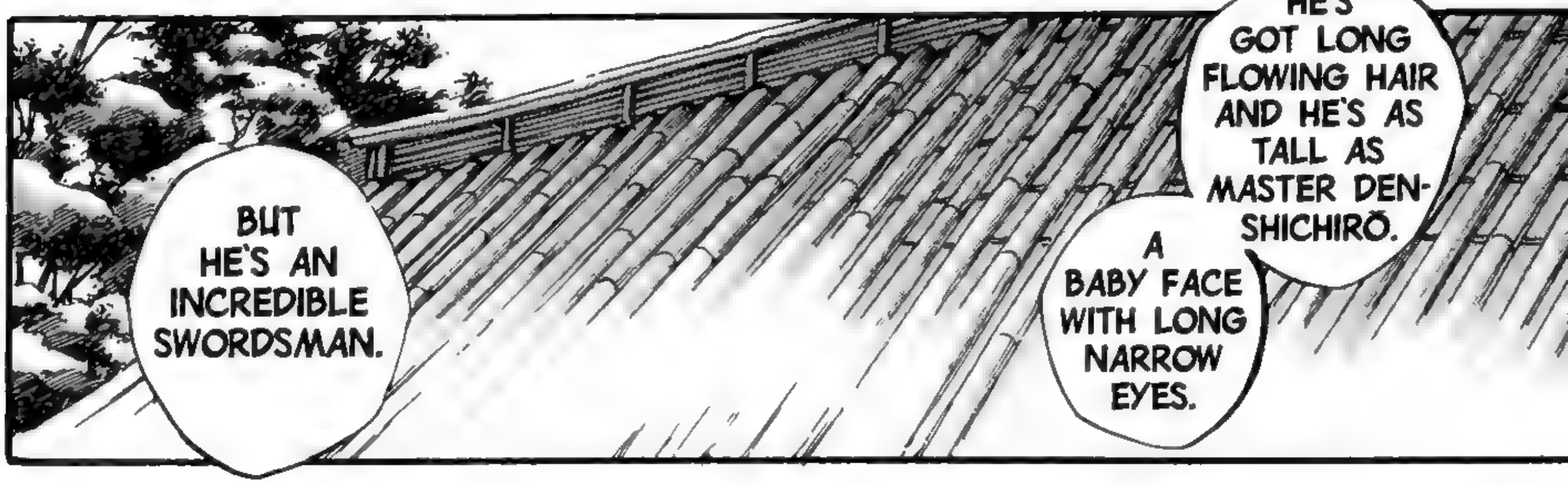
HOW HORRI-BLE.
MUST HURRY.

#197
The Real Kojirō

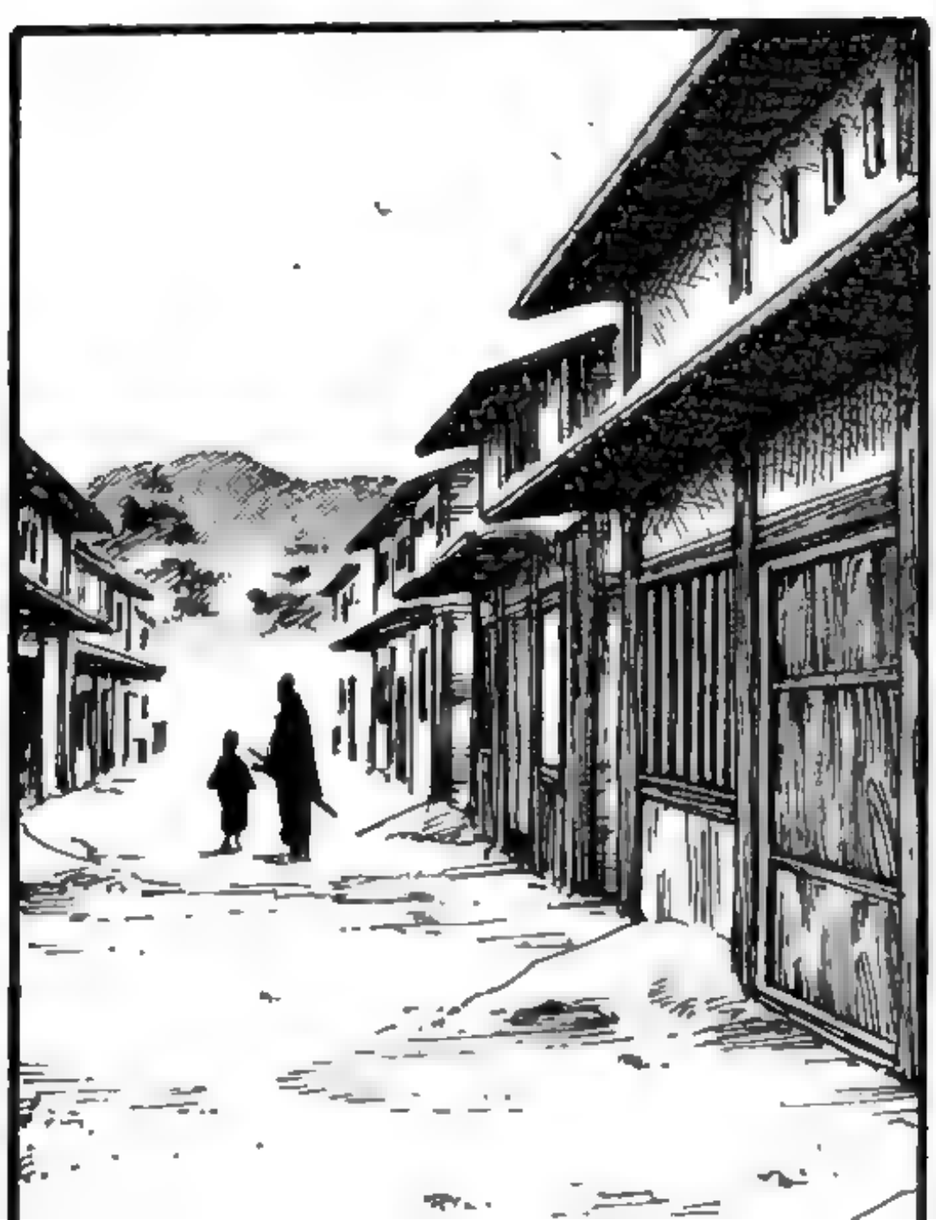
.....
GLANCE

!!

UM...
WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?
THIS ISN'T ...

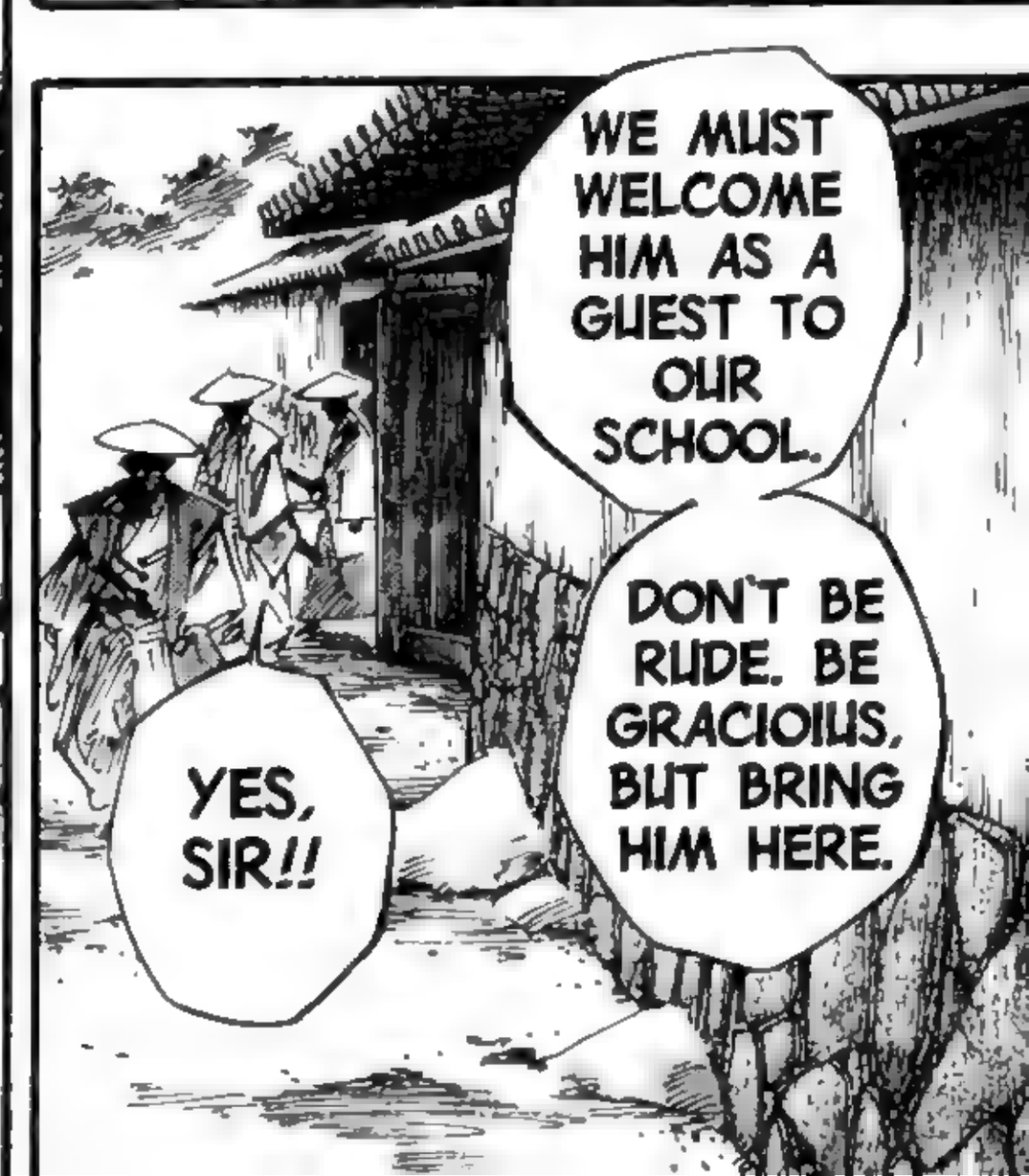

HE'S GOT LONG FLOWING HAIR AND HE'S AS TALL AS MASTER DEN-SHICHIRŌ.
A BABY FACE WITH LONG NARROW EYES.
BUT HE'S AN INCREDIBLE SWORDSMAN.

WE SHOULD HAVE AN IDEA OF MUSASHI'S WHERE-ABOUTS BY NOW.



NOW THEN...
HOW SHALL I BRING THIS UP WITH DENSHICHIRŌ?

AND HE'S DEAF.
...!?


WE MUST WELCOME HIM AS A GUEST TO OUR SCHOOL.
DON'T BE RUDE. BE GRACIOUS, BUT BRING HIM HERE.
YES, SIR!!

AT THE HON'AMI ESTATE.

I'M CER-TAIN.
I WAITED OUTSIDE FOR A WHILE, BUT HE NEVER CAME OUT.
THAT MUST BE WHERE HE'S STAYING.
I SEE.

AND?
I FOLLOWED YOUR ORDERS AND FOLLOWED THAT SAMURAI YESTERDAY.
HE'S STAYING AT THE HON'AMI ESTATE.
WHAT'S THAT?

WELL DONE.

AMBUSHING MUSASHI MAY NO LONGER BE AN OPTION...
HON'AMI KŌETSU...

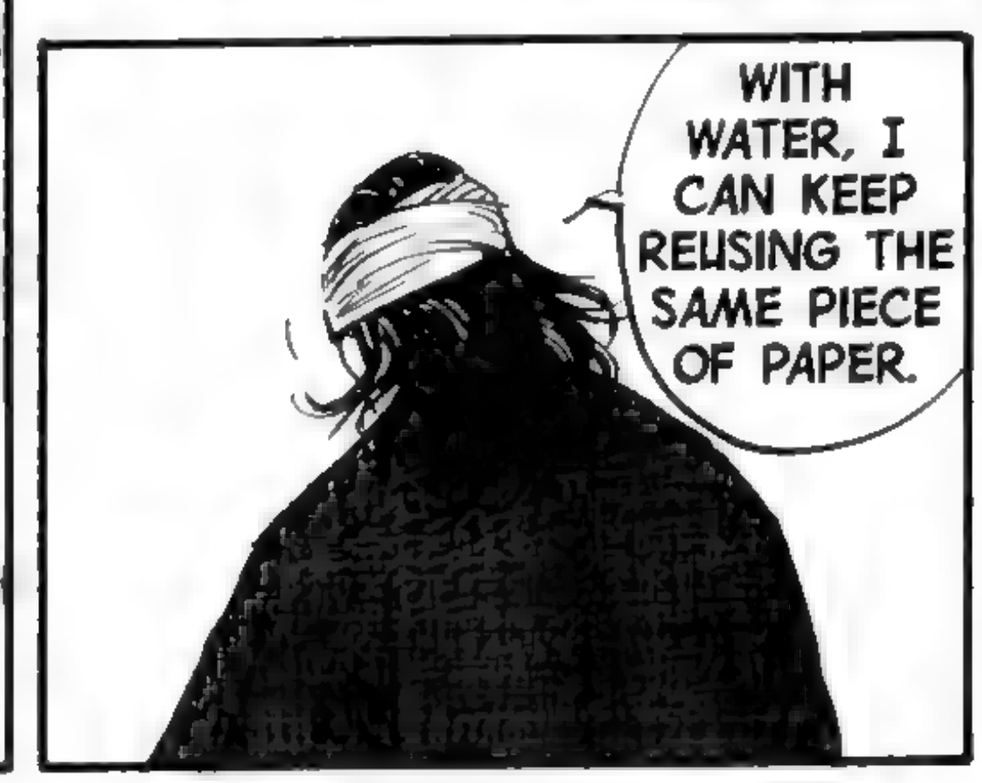
...

SHALL I BRING YOU SOME INK?
SPLP

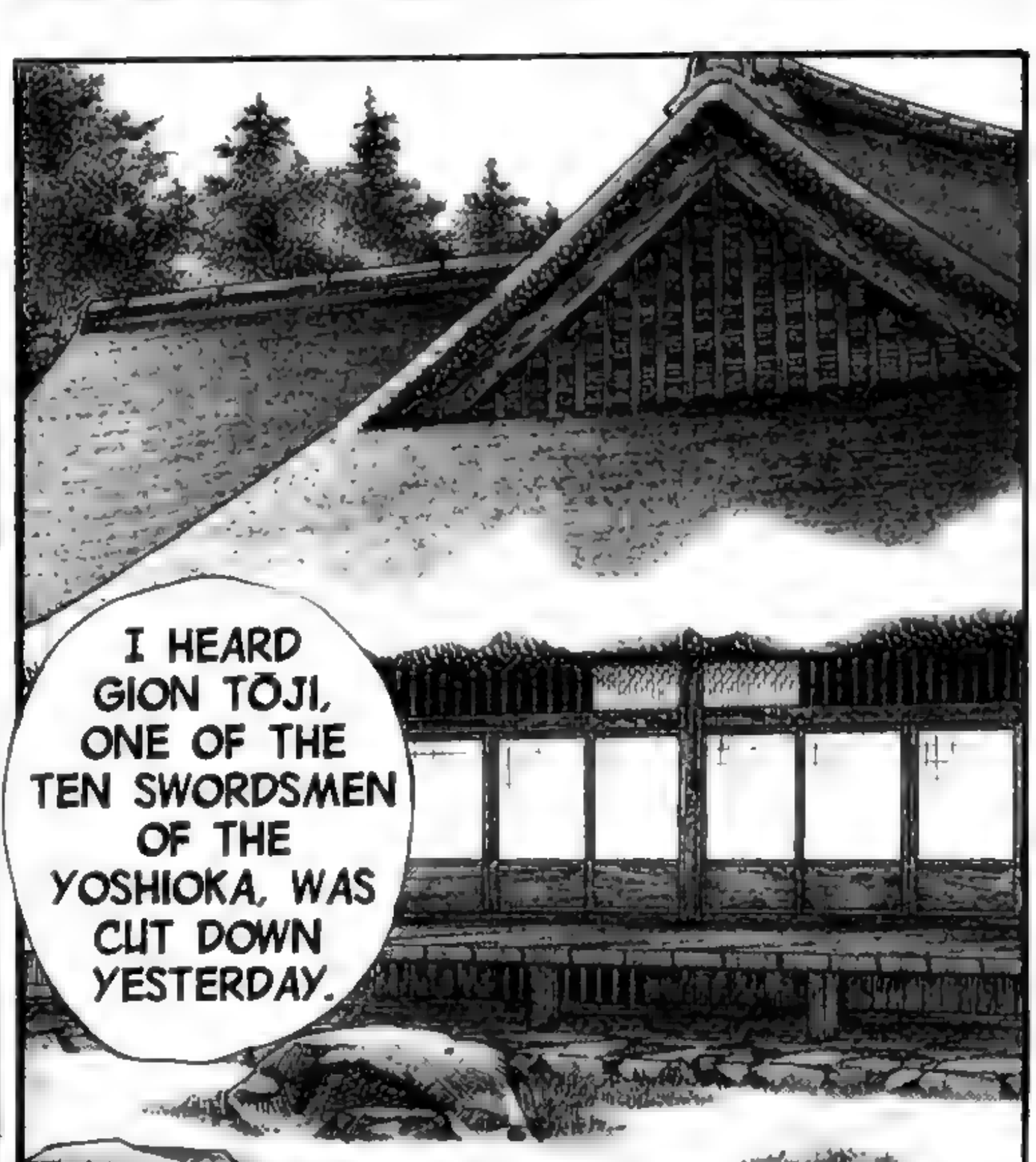
.....

A WOMAN STANDING AT A BRIDGE.
WHO IS IT?

THAT IS A PERSON, ISN'T IT?
IT'S A PUMPKIN.


WITH WATER, I CAN KEEP REUSING THE SAME PIECE OF PAPER.

.....
HE CAME AFTER ME.


I HEARD GION TŌJI, ONE OF THE TEN SWORDSMEN OF THE YOSHIOKA, WAS CUT DOWN YESTERDAY.

.....

HE WASN'T IN HIS RIGHT MIND.

IF MY FIRST SWING MISSED, THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT WOULD'VE HAPPENED.

I WAS JUST LUCKY.

BE-SIDES...

.....

YOU SEEM ON EDGE.

I SAID THAT HE CAME AFTER ME.

HM?

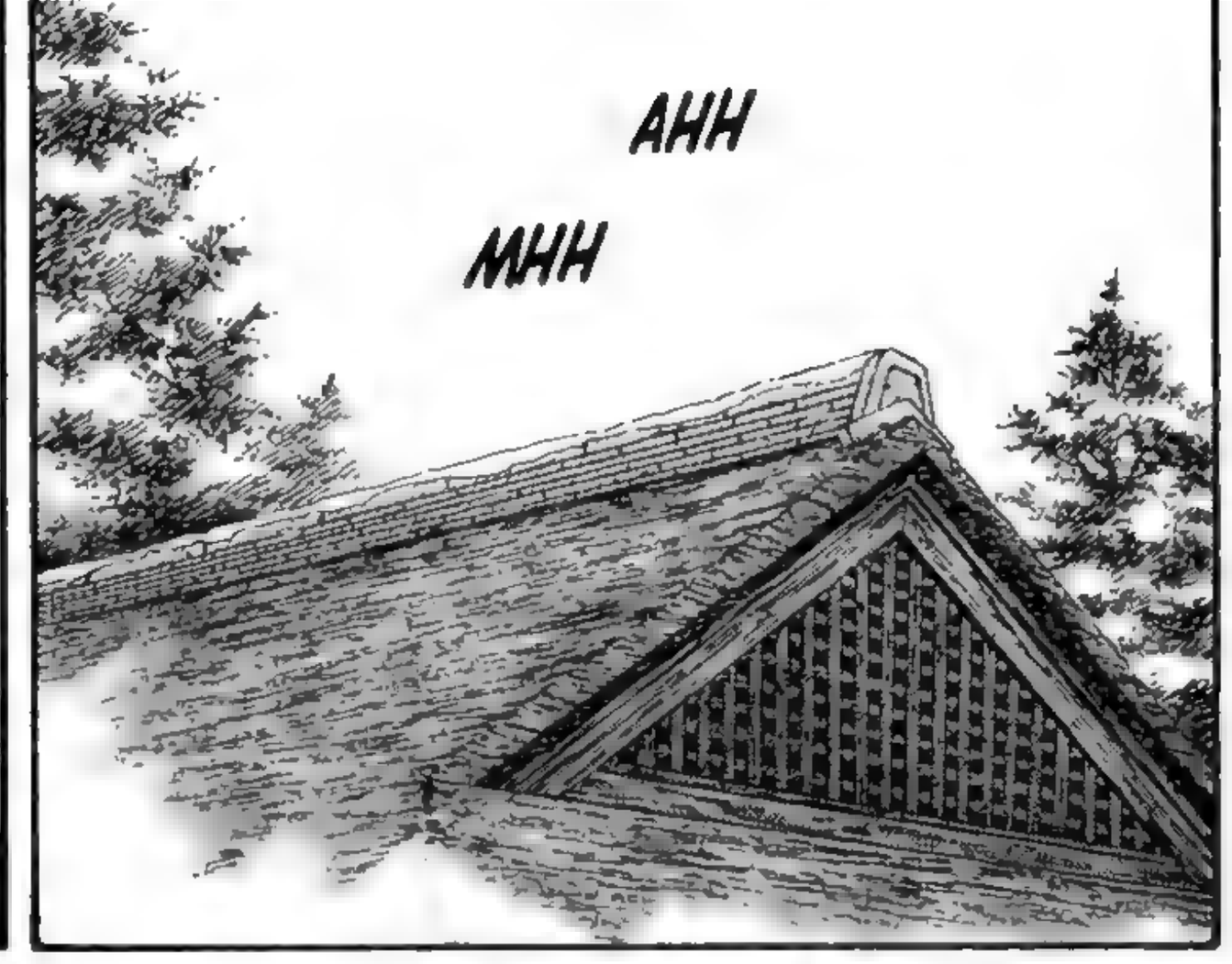
THAT'S NOT RIGHT...

...

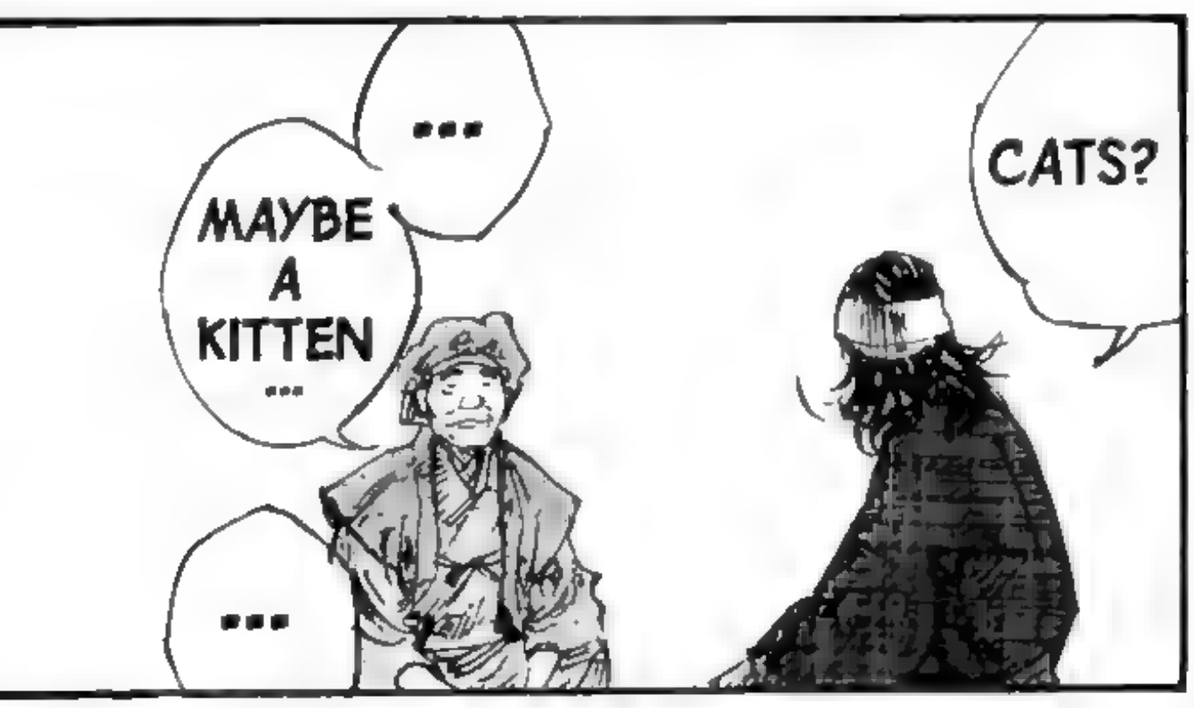
BUT THAT'S NOT REALLY TRUE...

I STARTED IT A YEAR AGO...

MUSASHI
...


AHH
MHH

PERHAPS THIS FIGHT WITH YOSHIOKA HAS SPUN OUT OF CONTROL.


...
MAYBE A KITTEN ...
...
CATS?

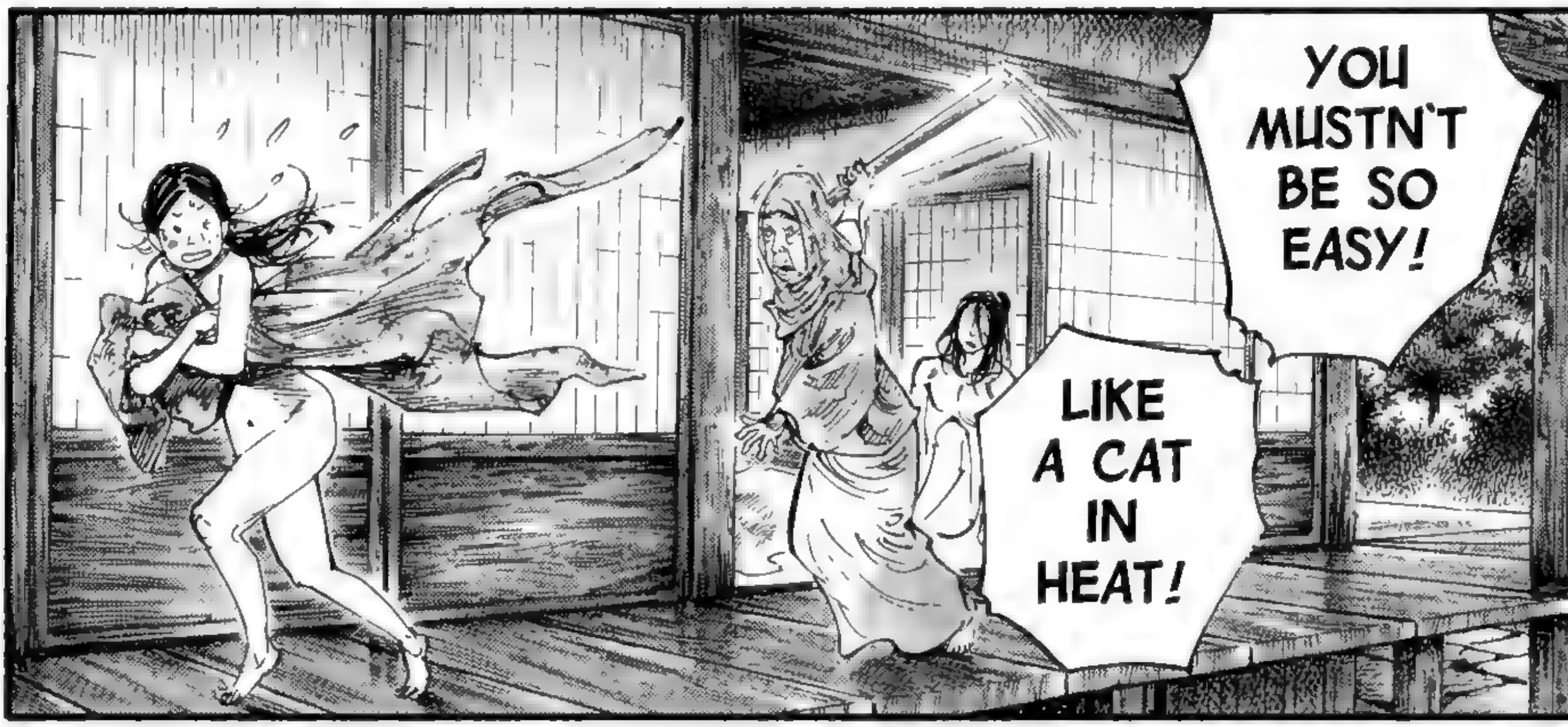
I JUST HAVE TO CONCEN-TRATE ON MY ART.
THAT'S ALL I NEED TO DO.

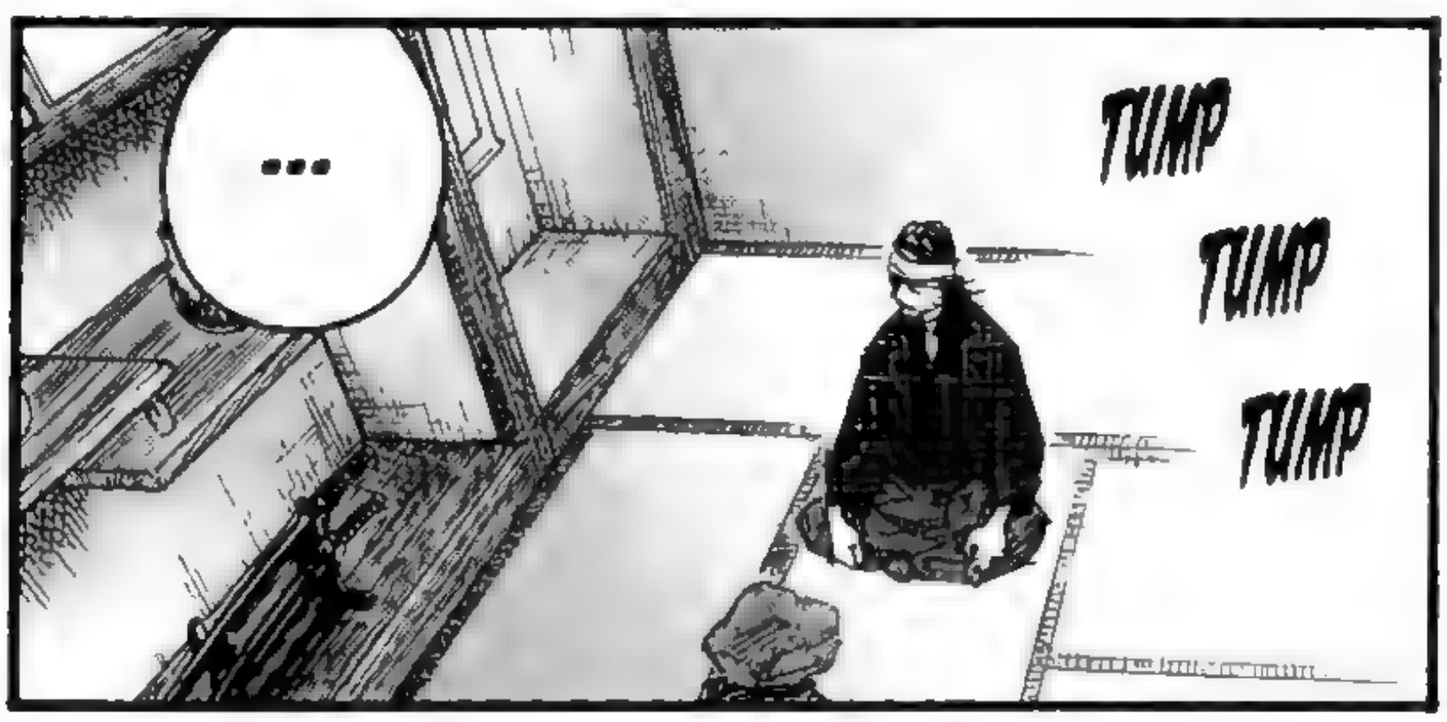
AHH
UMHHH

...
NOT AT ALL.
IN A FEW DAYS, I'LL FIGHT DENSHICHIRŌ AND IT WILL ALL BE OVER.

THD
THD
GET OUT !!

NO NEED FOR SECOND THOUGHTS.


YOU MUSTN'T BE SO EASY!
LIKE A CAT IN HEAT!


...
TUMP
TUMP
TUMP

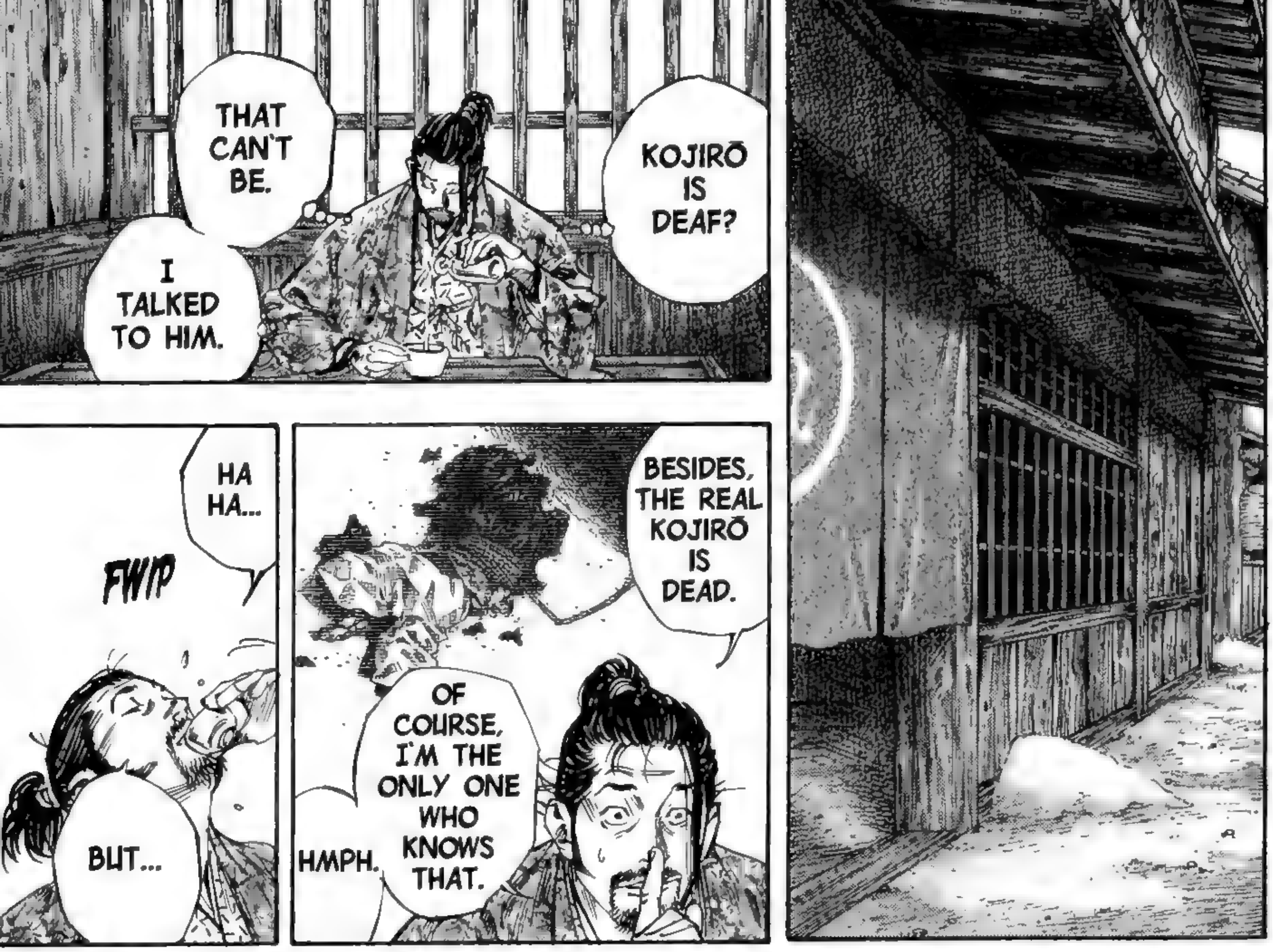
...?
HA HA HA
AN-OTHER GUEST OF OURS.

AUHH

THAT CAN'T BE.

KOJIRŌ IS DEAF?

I TALKED TO HIM.



HA HA...

FWIP

BUT...

BESIDES, THE REAL KOJIRŌ IS DEAD.

OF COURSE, I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS THAT.

HMPH.

AM I JUST IMAGINING THINGS?

HE'S BEEN DEAD FOR A WHILE, BUT HIS REPUTATION SEEMS TO BE GROWING BY THE DAY.

I DON'T GET IT.

FWIP

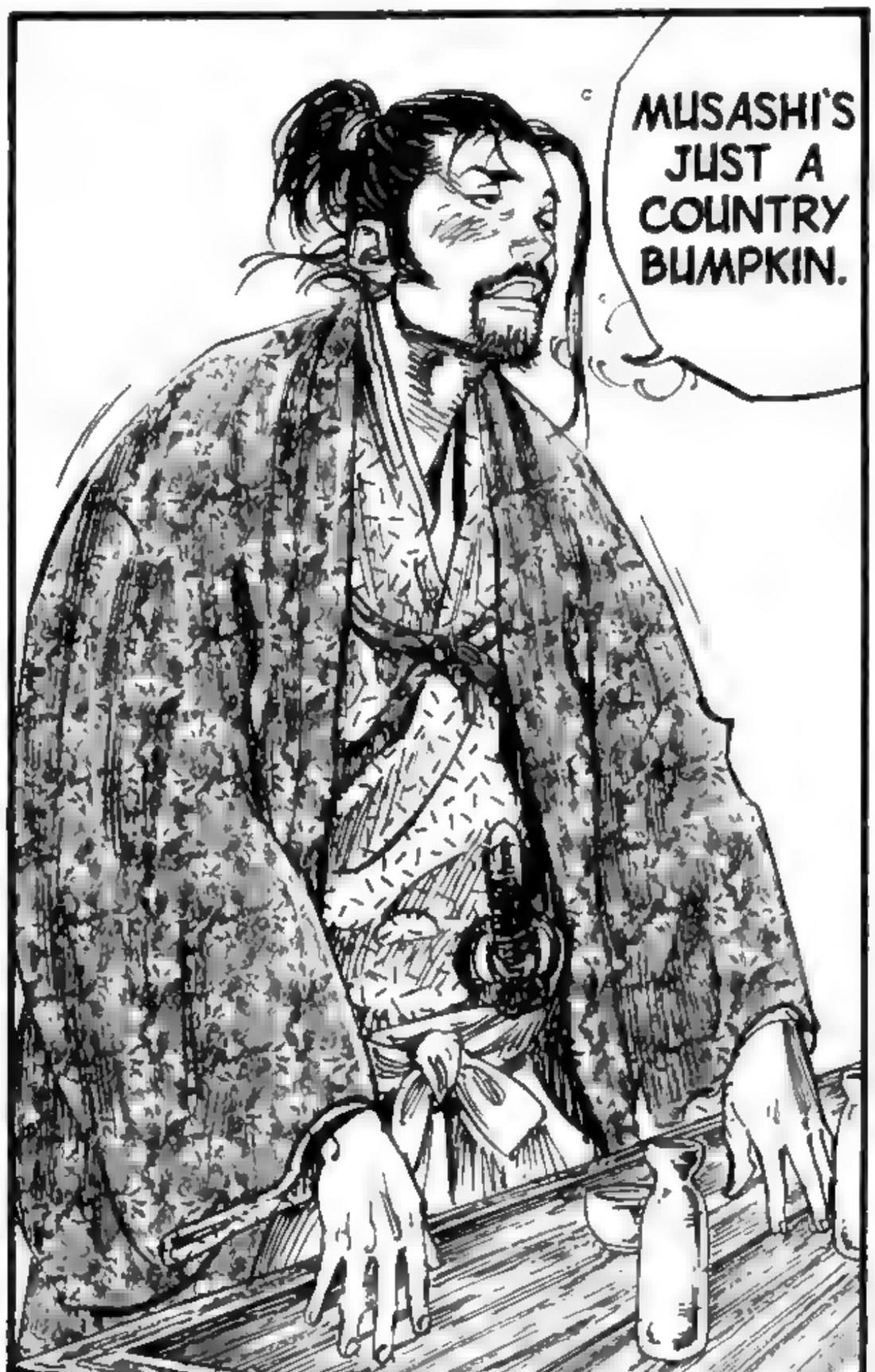
OTHERWISE, I WOULDN'T HAVE HIS CERTIFICATE.

ONE THING I KNOW FOR SURE IS THAT HE'S DEAD.

MEANWHILE I'M A DRUNK WHO RESORTS TO DECEIT TO PAY HIS BILLS.

MUSASHI'S BEEN THE TALK OF THE TOWN EVER SINCE HE DEFEATED THE HEAD OF THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.

WHEW.



HEY... CALM DOWN. WHAT IF HE HEARS YOU?!

HE JUST WANTS TO SHOW OFF HOW STRONG HE IS. IF HE WERE REALLY STRONG HE WOULDN'T NEED TO DO THAT!!

JUST TO MAKE A SCENE!!

A REAL FIGHTER WOULD NEVER CUT DOWN PEOPLE LEFT AND RIGHT IN BROAD DAYLIGHT!!

WHAT ?!

HUH?
YOU'RE FROM THE YOSHI-OKA...

DID YOU SAY YOU'RE SASAKI KOJIRŌ?

WAIT... I'VE SEEN THIS MAN BEFORE.

WHY ARE YOU TRYING TO COVER THAT UP?
HE'S SUS-PICIOUS.

HA HA
I'M SASAKI KOJIRŌ.
I KNOW IT'S CONFUS-ING.
NO, I HEARD YOU SAY KOJIRŌ.

GRAB

THE WANTED POST-ING!

...

THAT DRAW-ING.

I GOT IT.

HURRY IT UP!!

...

WELL, I REALLY MUST BE GOING. WHAT DO I OWE YOU?

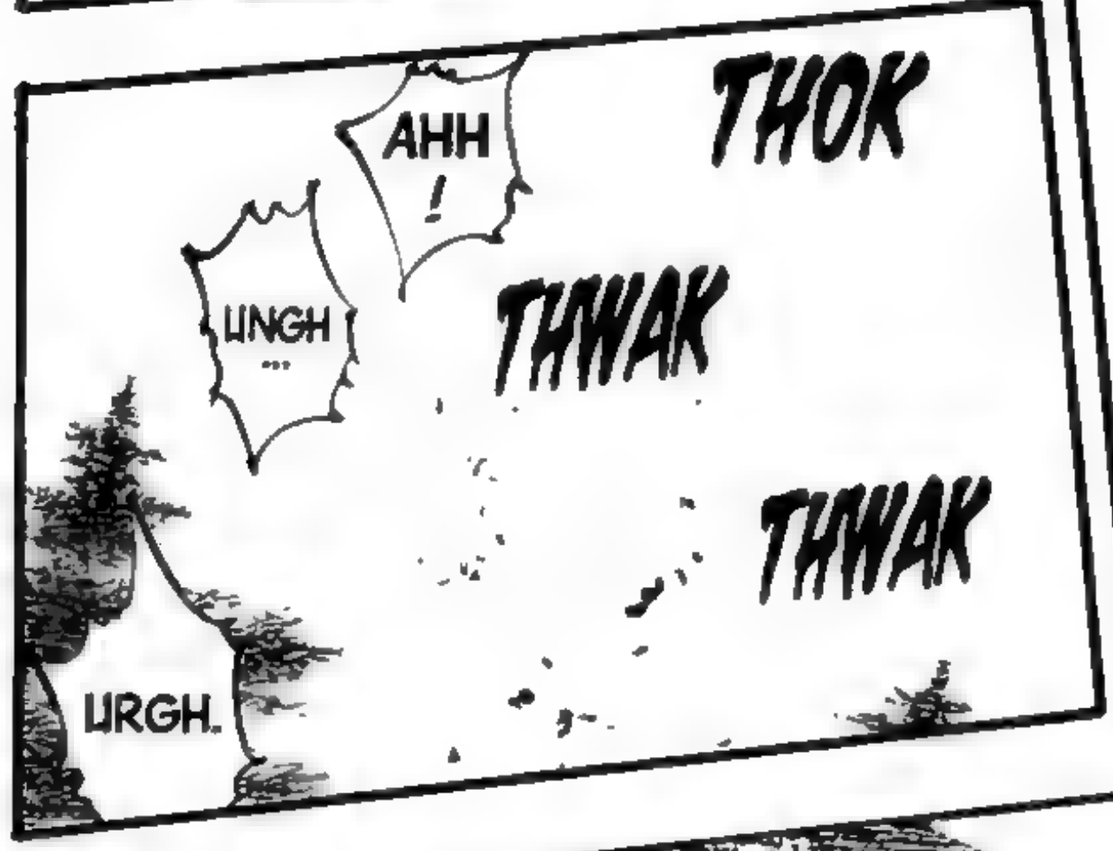
LET'S YOU AND I GO FOR A WALK.

NO.

I'M TELLING YOU, MY NAME IS SASAKI KOUJIRŌ!

...

THUNK
!!


AHH !
THOK
UNGH ...
THWAK
THWAK
URGH.

SEE?
HUF
HUF
HUF
IT IS HON'IDEN MATAHACHI.

!!
YANK

TUGG

...MUST MEAN THAT YOU KNOW KOJIRŌ.
THE FACT THAT YOU MENTION HIS NAME...
IT WOULD BE TOO DANGEROUS TO POSE AS HIM WITHOUT KNOWING HIM AT ALL.
ARGH ...
AHH!
AHH...
PLIP
PLIP
...
THUNK
SAY SOME-THING.
THOK
AGH !
YOU BETTER COME UP WITH A BETTER STORY THAN THAT.
I MEAN, HE'S DEAD.
I-I DON'T KNOW HIM.
HUF
HUF
HUF

HM...?

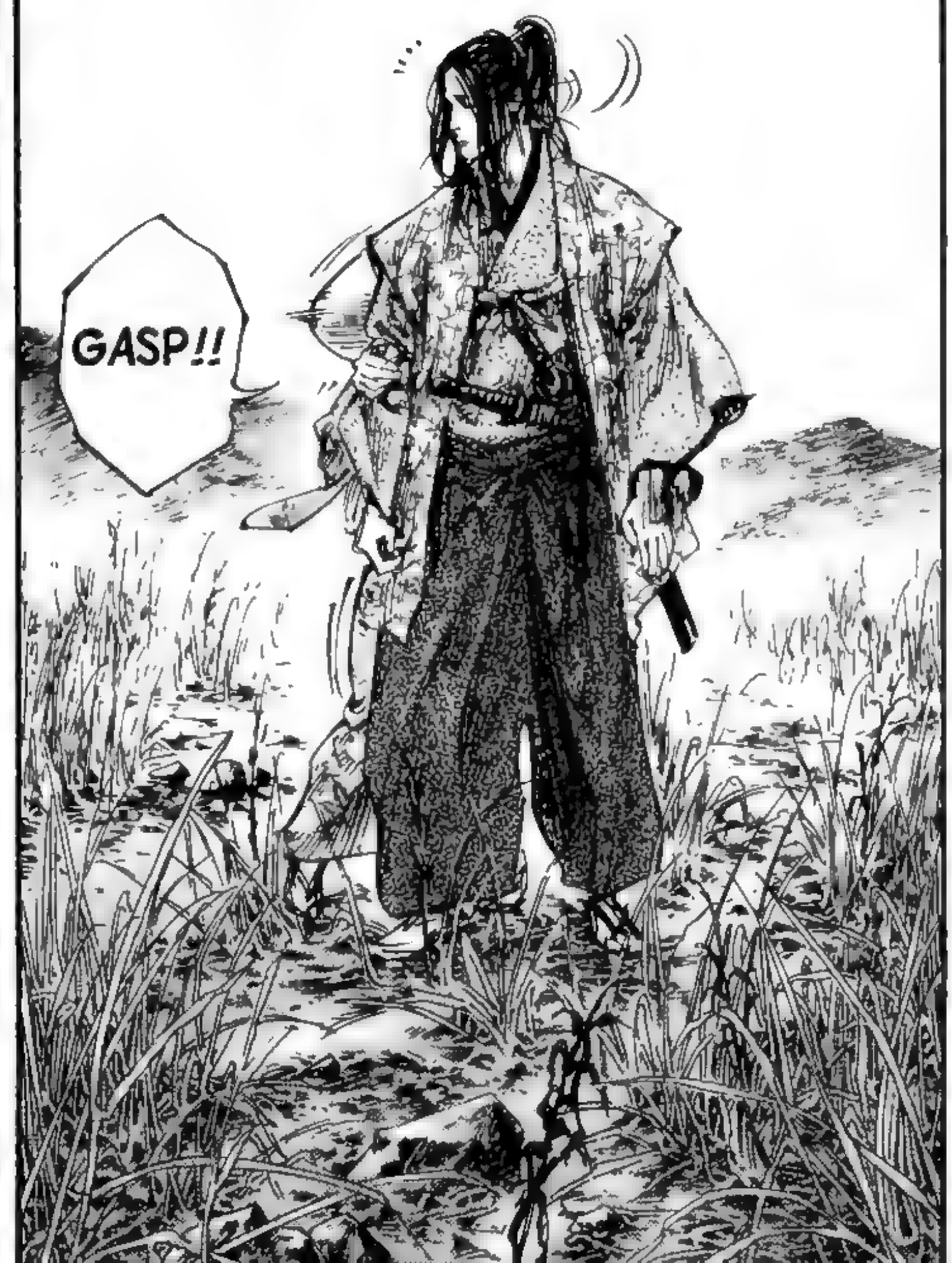
AND NARROW EYES.
AND A BABY FACE.

.....

HE'S AS TALL AS DENSHI-CHIRŌ SENSEI.
HE'S GOT LONG FLOWING HAIR...

HEY, THIS ISN'T A SHOW. GO AWAY.
WAIT, SIR...

I'LL CUT YOU DOWN, KID!



AUHH.

TH-
THE
REAL
KOJIRŌ.
...?

About the Author

VAGABOND was created by Takehiko Inoue, author of the best-selling manga *SLAM DUNK*, with over 100 million copies in print worldwide. Critically acclaimed, Inoue received the 2000 Media Arts award for Manga from the Japanese Ministry of Culture as well as the 2000 Kodansha Award for best manga for his work on *VAGABOND*. In 2002, *VAGABOND* received the prestigious Tezuka award for best manga, and in 2003, Inoue was nominated for a 2003 Eisner Award for best writer/artist. To date *VAGABOND* has sold over 22 million copies throughout the world. In addition to his numerous manga titles, Inoue also created the character designs for the PlayStation basketball game, *ONE ON ONE*.

About *VAGABOND* and Miyamoto Musashi

Takehiko Inoue's *VAGABOND*, based on Eiji Yoshikawa's novel *MUSASHI*, is a fictional account of the life of Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645). The historical figure Miyamoto Musashi, author of the philosophical strategy guide *A BOOK OF FIVE RINGS*, was a master of the sword and was revered as a "sword-saint." He founded the Niten Ichi style of sword fighting, which is typified by fighting with both long and short swords simultaneously—holding the long sword with the right hand and the short sword with the left. Musashi was also a master of the "gentler arts"—he was a master of *sumi-e* (black ink drawings), metalworking, and woodcarving. The films that comprise *THE SAMURAI TRILOGY* directed by Hiroshi Inagaki and starring Toshiro Mifune, were also based on Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*. Inspired by the huge success of *VAGABOND* in Japan, in 2003 NHK produced the historical period drama *MUSASHI*. Also based on Yoshikawa's novel, this drama stars kabuki actor Shinnosuke Ichikawa as Musashi and TV star Ryoko Yonekura as Otsu.

A note on names:

The names presented within the context of this manga are presented in the traditional Japanese order—surname followed by first name. "Miyamoto" is Miyamoto Musashi's last name and "Musashi" is his first name. The name of the creator of *VAGABOND*, however, has been presented first name first, last name second. "Takehiko" is the author's first name and "Inoue" is his last name.

Glossary and Extraneous Background Information

A Brief Historical Overview
The Warring States or *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) in Japan was a time of chaos and conflict. Central authorities, in the form of the imperial court and the shogunate, had grown increasingly weak and the land was effectively ruled autonomously by numerous *daimyo* (domainal lords). Looking to expand their spheres of control, the *daimyo* were constantly at war with each other. One *daimyo* in particular, Oda Nobunaga, set out on a mission to unify Japan by means of conquest. Incredibly successful, by the time of his assassination in 1582, he managed to control approximately one-third of Japan. One of Nobunaga's chief generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, became Nobunaga's successor to carry on the quest for unification. Through a process of conquest and conciliation, Hideyoshi succeeded in creating a federation amongst the *daimyo,* and by 1590, order was restored to Japan under Hideyoshi's rule. Hideyoshi's death in 1598, however, presented the question of succession. Most of the *daimyo* from the domains in the west remained loyal to the Toyotomi Clan and its five-year-old heir, Toyotomi Hideyori. Tokugawa Ieyasu, however, leading the major *daimyo* from central and eastern Japan, challenged the Toyotomi clan's leadership. The two sides clashed at the Battle of Sekigahara (1600) in Mino (located in present day Gifu Prefecture) where the Tokugawa claimed an overwhelming victory. From that point on, the Tokugawa clan would effectively rule Japan for the next 250 years. The political stability that resulted put mass numbers of samurai out of work. Masterless samurai, known as *ronin*, were forced to wander the land to seek out employment. This, the beginning of the Edo Period (1600-1868), sets the stage for many of the period dramas and *chambara* sword-fighting films that have popularized the image of the samurai to a Western audience.

Hon'ami Koetsu (1558-1637)
Famed artist and calligrapher who co-founded an influential arts movement called the Rinpa School. Koetsu was involved in numerous fields including tea ceremony, pottery, and calligraphy. In addition, Koetsu succeeded the line of his family's ancestral business of sword polishing and appraisals.

Hozoin Spear Technique
Created by the Buddhist monk Kakuzenbo Hoin In'ei (1521-1607) of Hozoin Temple, which was a sub-temple of Kofukuji Temple in Nara. This spear technique is typified by quick dexterous movements rather than the use of brute force.

Ito Ittosai (Dates unknown)
Founder of the Itto-ryu school of sword fighting. Before establishing his own style, Ittosai is said to have studied a variant of the Chujo-ryu style of sword fighting under Kanemaki Jisai's instruction.

Rengeoin
Located in eastern Kyoto, Rengeoin Temple is more commonly referred to as Sanjusangendo. The main hall of Rengeoin features an amazing display of 1001 Kannon Buddhist statues.

Sasaki Kojiro (dates unknown)
The legendary archrival of Miyamoto Musashi, Kojiro is believed to have studied the Chujo-ryu style of swordsmanship under the instruction of either Toda Seigen or Kanemaki Jisai. Kojiro was renowned for his *Tsubame-gaeshi*, or "swallow-cut" technique which was inspired by the movement of a swallow in flight.

Shinmen Takezo
Miyamoto Musashi's boyhood name.

Takuan Soho (1573-1645)
A monk of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism, by the time Takuan was 37, he was appointed abbot of the leading temple of the Rinzai sect, Daitokuji. Takuan was an important figure whose acute and brutally honest advice was sought by influential and powerful figures such as Emperor Go Mizuno and the shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu. His correspondence to Yagyu Munenori discussing Zen and swordsmanship entitled *THE UNFETTERED MIND* has become an influential treatise in both the areas of philosophy and martial arts. The pickled daikon radish, *takuan*, also bears his name.

The Yagyu Clan
Yagyu Muneyoshi Sekishusai (1527-1606) was the founder of the famed Yagyu-Shinkage school of sword fighting. His son Yagyu Munenori (1571-1646) was one of Tokugawa's key generals at the Battle of Sekigahara. Munenori was appointed as the official fencing instructor of the Tokugawa Clan, and in 1632 the Yagyu were appointed as the *ometsuke*—responsible for the surveillance of the *daimyo*. Although the Yagyu clan has been depicted in Kazuo Koike's *LONE WOLF AND CUB* as the plotters of the downfall of Itto Ogami, the general Japanese popular culture take on the Yagyu Clan is more positive. More specifically, Munenori's son, Yagyu Jubei (1607-1650), is viewed as a wandering hero protecting the people from evildoers.

Yoshioka Kempo (dates unknown)
A distinguished warrior during the *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) and the founder of the renowned Yoshioka school of sword fighting. Yoshioka Kempo mastered the Kyohachi style of swordmanship and then modified it to form the Yoshioka style. In the context of Inoue's *VAGABOND,* as well as in Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI,* Yoshioka Seijuro and Denshichiro are Kempo's sons, who are historically thought to have dueled with Miyamoto Musashi on numerous occasions.

Vagabond

Winner of the 2000 Media Arts Festival Award
Recipient of the 2000 Kodansha Award for Best Manga
Winner of the 2002 Tezuka Osamu Cultural Award
Nominated for a 2003 Eisner Award for Best Writer/Artist

"...reads like an Akira Kurosawa film captured on the printed page."
—Cliff Biggers, *Comics Buyer's Guide*

"...an extremely satisfying comics experience."
—Tony Isabella, *Comics Buyer's Guide*

"This really is one of the best comics currently being produced."
—Greg McElhatton, icomics.com

The highly anticipated return of *Vagabond*—the story of the life and times of Miyamoto Musashi, a man striving for enlightenment by way of the sword, destined to become the most renowned samurai of all time!

A tempest of a man has arrived in Kyoto and the entire city is in a fervor, anticipating the storm to come. Musashi has returned for a rematch against Yoshioka Denshichiro, and he's prepared to take down all of the Yoshioka Dojo to defeat him!

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This book reads from right to left.